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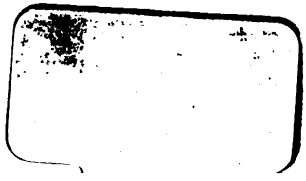

MAXWELL DREWITT.

MAXWELL DREWITT.

A Novel.

By F. G. TRAFFORD,

AUTHOR OF "GEORGE GEITH," "CITY AND SUBURB," "PHEMIE KELLER," "TOO MUCH ALONE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MAXWELL DREWITT.

CHAPTER I.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

"CONFOUNDEDLY unlucky for you, Max."

"Truth, though you spoke it, my boy."

Having uttered which civil reply, Mr. Maxwell Drewitt flung the fag-end of a cigar he had been gnawing out of the window, lit another, and commenced smoking like a chimney.

I wonder, reader, what opinion you, looking into that little sitting-room, would be inclined to form concerning the two men who tenanted it—what sort of character you would naturally attribute to each—what precise road through life you might think it most probable they would respectively follow.

That tall one lolling on the sofa will, if you ask his name, answer, "Tim Ryan, at your service;" whilst the younger man, supposing you put the same question to him, would first inquire, "What the deuce business it was of yours?" and finally give in to the fact, that people did call him Maxwell Drewitt, nephew to Archibald Drewitt, Esquire, of Kincorth, near Duranmore, Connemara, Galway, Ireland.

It is the story of Maxwell Drewitt's life which I am about to try to tell, and I must ask you before we go further, to look attentively at him, and at the man whom for lack of a better word must be called his friend.

There they sit in the sunlight, in the parlour of Mr. Ryan's house, which is a long, low, two-storey, whitewashed cottage, standing a little back from the highroad leading to Duranmore. There they are for you to study at your leisure. Ryan fair; Drewitt dark; the former grey-eyed, reddish haired, wide-mouthed, and eight-and-twenty; the latter nearly six years younger, slightly made, and rather under than over the middle height, with dark eyes, dark complexion, and regular features.

Nothing very remarkable, you think, about

either of them in face, dress, circumstances, or expression.

Perhaps you may judge that Ryan is inclined to mirth, whilst Drewitt affects gravity; that Max has more brains than Tim, and Tim a better temper than Max; but still, notwithstanding Ryan turns his eyes at times in a way which is not pleasant, and although when Drewitt speaks he has a peculiar and most ungraceful knack of not moving his lips like other people, you see nothing evil in either face.

Look again, look steadily, and be sure. Nothing evil? No, decidedly not; and this time you are certain of the accuracy of your observation.

All of which only proves that, spite of Lavater, faces are oftentimes great lies. They are the paper-money of society, for which, on demand, there frequently proves to be no gold in the human coffer.

Maxwell Drewitt's face, at any rate, was a lie, for it told no unpleasant tales about his character. There was nothing disagreeable in its expression; there was no shadow of evil in his eyes, and yet the person that knew him best perhaps on earth

—his uncle—once declared, "the man who trusted Maxwell Drewitt twice was a fool."

He had been that fool, so it is fair to suppose him a competent judge in the matter.

Wherever Maxwell Drewitt had been born; under whatsoever circumstances he had been brought up; had he been the son of a bishop, or the heir of a duke, there can be no reasonable doubt but that he would have turned out just as bad a man, though, perhaps, a man differently bad.

With Timothy Ryan the case was different. It seemed as though Nature had hardly been able to decide what to make of him; that she had hesitated between an honest man and a rogue; and that while she remained irresolute, training and nurture took the matter into their own hands, and did the worst for him they could.

He himself was wont to declare he was as honest as he could afford to be; and if such were the case we can only suppose that the smallness of his capital restricted his expenditure of probity and fair dealing to almost a minimum sum per annum.

There ensued a long pause after the two remarks

I have recorded, during which the younger man puffed the smoke of his cigar out into the summer air, and the elder toyed with the tassels of the window-curtains and looked forth upon Duranmore Bay.

"Confoundedly unlucky," he at length repeated, bringing his eyes back from the sea and the mountains, and stretching one long leg across a neighbouring chair—"confoundedly unlucky, indeed."

"You have made that remark three times," answered Mr. Drewitt, "and I do not see that it grows any less true by repetition, for which reason let us quit talking about the matter. If I am not at Kincorth I shall be elsewhere. We must always be someplace, Tim; on the earth, or in it. What's done is done, and there is no use fretting over it. When one door is shut, another is open. The thing that has been predestined from the beginning of time must come to pass before the end of it. Are not those your sentiments?"

"Yes, but then we never know what has been predestined till it actually happens; and this cursed marriage has not come off yet. Though I am a firm fatalist, still I never leave anything for fate to do

that I can do for myself, and should advise you ditto. Can't you scotch the wheel, Max?"

"I? No," replied the other.

"Nor loosen a screw, nor upset the coach matrimonial, nor—nor do anything, my son?"

"Not a thing," said Mr. Drewitt out of one side of his mouth.

"Could you not go to London and marry her yourself?"

"And saddle myself with a poor wife, and in due time a tribe of hungry brats, leaving my worthy uncle at liberty to marry any one else whom he might take it into his wise head to fancy. No thank you, Tim, I am rather too wide awake for that. Let him bring home his young wife; I won't try to prevent him."

"They say she is pretty, Max, as well as young," remarked Mr. Ryan. "She will wind him round her finger. There will be some stir at the old place when she comes over."

"Yes, the same stir there always has been," said Maxwell Drewitt with a malicious smile, "a rustling of bills, and clamour of duns, a rumour of writs and dread of bailiffs. I wish the lady joy of her bargain. She will see hundreds going

out, but not a sixpence will she ever be able to keep in her purse. She will have to pay the servants' wages with promises, and manage her housekeeping on credit, and turn her silk gowns three times. She will be the scapegoat in trouble, the stay at home in pleasure. She will have to teach Willy and Katty, and fight it out with Sue. She will have no excitement from year's end to year's end, for it is not likely she can either drink or hunt. Altogether, Mrs. Archibald Drewitt of Kincorth will have an agreeable life of it, and if she were the devil I pity her."

At that Ryan looked up. "You pity her?" he repeated slowly and doubtingly, for he knew his companion seldom pitied any but those he was resolved should ere long require an abundance of the article from some one. "You pity her?"

"Yes, faith," answered the other; "I know what Kincorth has been to us; I know what it will be to her. But hang it, Ryan, let us quit talking about this new martyr; put a cigar in your mouth and shut up."

"They say," continued Mr. Ryan, unheeding his friend's polite request, "that your uncle intends settling Kincorth upon her."

For a moment Maxwell Drewitt remained silent, while his face changed and darkened; then he answered—

"Likely enough. The man's in love, you know."

"So he may be," replied Ryan, "but justice is justice for all that; and it is not justice to cut you out of the house and demesne for ever."

"And a day," finished the smoker; "but bless your soul, it may just as well be decided, now that I am never to be a farthing the better for any Drewitt living or dead, except myself. It must have come to this sooner or later, and I say it is better sooner, than later."

"Then how am I to be paid?" inquired the other. At which question Mr. Maxwell Drewitt raised his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders and looked full in his friend's face while he laughed aloud.

"What the devil is amusing you?" asked Ryan angrily.

"So you were waiting to be paid out of Kincorth, were you?" answered Mr. Drewitt. "You would have been content to run barefoot till Archibald Drewitt dropped off his shoes some fine winter morning following the hounds, or slipped his feet

out of them after a night's hard drinking preparatory to taking a sound sleep in Eversbeg Abbey. Laugh!—it is enough to make a cat laugh to think of such patience."

"I was not waiting for his death," retorted Ryan. "I thought he would do something for you before long—make some suitable provision for the next heir."

"You chanced to be damnably out in your thought, then," replied the younger man; "that is all the remark I have to offer on the subject."

"Well, then, how am I to be paid?" repeated Mr. Ryan. "You owe me more than I can afford to lose, Max, and——"

"Don't trouble yourself to make a speech," interrupted Drewitt, "there is no audience; you want to know how you are to be paid. I'll pay you. You perhaps want to know when. Within twelve months. You may further desire to know how, but that is my business, not yours. Now let us talk about something else."

"If you have not much gold you have lots of brass," remarked the other: "you borrow and borrow and borrow, and then say I am not to ask a question about repayment."

"Are you going to dun me, Ryan?"

"I do not want to dun you; I only wish to know how I am to be paid."

"I have told you I will pay you within twelve months from this present hour."

"But how? How is it possible?"

"Mr. Timothy Ryan," broke in his friend, "there is only one way in which a man without a pound note in his pocket can possibly pay his debts honourably—with an ounce of lead. If you would choose that settlement between us I can have no possible objection to such an arrangement; but if, on the other hand, you prefer taking your principal and interest in the coin of the realm you must wait my time, and my time is a year from this date."

"Have your year, then," said the other, sulkily. "I don't want to press you. I only——"

"That's right," answered Mr. Drewitt, as his friend paused. "Now let us talk about something else."

"What else? The election?"

"Thank you. I hear enough about that up at the house. The very name of it drives me away. I am sick and tired to death of the whole con-

founded humbug;" and as he concluded, the young man rose from his chair, placed a somewhat shabby hat jauntily on his head, and prepared to take his departure.

"Stop a minute," entreated Ryan. "You know the seat is to be contested this time, and pretty hotly too. Sache is not going to walk over the course as Abbott did. You are old enough to take some decided part on your own account. Which party do you side with?"

"Really, I have never thought about the matter; but I will now. Let me see—who is my uncle for?"

"Sache, of course."

"Then I am for Ryan, of course," returned Mr. Drewitt.

"May we count upon your assistance?" asked Ryan eagerly.

"I do not know," answered the younger man. "Any good likely to come of it?" he inquired, after a moment's pause.

"What is your figure?" said Ryan. (Among friends, you see, reader, much ceremony can be dispensed with.) "What is your figure?"

"That place of Lynch's has just fallen in—that

place near Eversbeg—round the headland, mean—between the abbey and the shore."

"Oh, that! It is promised to Hunter, a Scotch fellow. He talked about building a good house on it."

"Did he? Well, talk's cheaper than building, any day. It is a nice farm though, and you can just mention to Waller that I like it, and that Hunter is a Sacheite. I would take it without a fine, on lease of Waller's life. You might think it over. Good-bye." And without waiting for an answer, Mr. Drewitt strolled leisurely out of the house, and wended his way towards home.

"It is my belief," remarked Mr. Ryan, as he watched his visitor's departure, "it is my belief, Max, that you are the making of as great a scoundrel as ever broke bread."

And considering Mr. Timothy Ryan was a long way from being a honest man himself, this remark may be regarded as a solemn truth, for Mr. Maxwell Drewitt's friend was by no means biased in his judgment, either by the prejudices of superior virtue or by any contracted ideas as to the number of vices requisite to form a scoundrel.

It was simply the confession of faith of a man

who stuck at few things, concerning the character of a man who stuck at none; and when he had given utterance to his opinion in the sentence recorded, Timothy Ryan, Esq., solicitor, felt himself wonderfully relieved, and at liberty to retire from the window to a table covered with books and papers and letters and deeds and leases, where he was soon up to his ears in business.

He had not been writing for more than fifteen minutes, however, when Maxwell Drewitt reappeared.

He came lounging into the room with the same immoveable expression on his countenance, and the eternal cigar between his lips—for Maxwell Drewitt lived smoking; he did nothing without either a pipe or a weed in his mouth, and the principal reason perhaps why he liked tobacco was, because his uncle detested it.

"I say, Ryan," began the young man, taking one hand out of his pocket in order to knock the ash off his cigar, "I say, Ryan, lend me a pen and sheet of paper, will you, for five minutes? I want to send a letter off to-day, and it will be too late for post, I find, if I go back to Kincorth. There, don't disturb yourself—that will do."

And as he concluded, the speaker pulled a chair up to the opposite end of the table, dragged the writing materials his friend looked out, towards him, and then, after sitting biting his nails for a few seconds, shaded the top of the sheet with his hand, dipped his pen in the ink, muttered an oath about the latter being so infernally thick, and began.

Busily the quill at the lawyer's desk went scratching over the foolscap; rapidly was line after line completed; hurriedly were erasures made and other sentences substituted; but spite of all his hurry, Mr. Ryan managed to keep an eye on his visitor, and tried to make out what he was writing.

He might as well have spared himself the trouble, for even when Maxwell did lift his hand for a moment from the top of the page to the end, that he might finish biting his nails down to the quick, Mr. Ryan found it impossible to read his friend's letter upside down.

"Never mind," he thought, "I shall know all about it one of these days. Judging from his face, he means no good to some poor devil."

Mr. Ryan was right, and if you, dear reader, would like to watch the progress of Mr. Maxwell

Drewitt's little game, we can walk round to the other end of the table, and read the epistle over his shoulder.

[PRIVATE.]

"Inchnagawn Cottage, near Duranmore,
June 11th, 18—.

"DEAR SIR,—I suppose you have heard ere this that my uncle is going to be married to a young lady named Dyak, a daughter of Colonel Dyak, of London, but conclude that his intention of settling Kincorth upon her will be as new to you as it was until last night to me.

"I am sure it will seem but natural to you that I should wish to prevent this, as you are aware that by the terms of my grandfather's will, my father, the elder son, was disinherited, and that my sisters and self were consequently left dependent on the generosity, or justice, of my uncle.

"You will at once see the effect of such a settlement. It would cut me off for ever from all hope of possessing this portion of my grandfather's property; as in case of my uncle dying without issue, Kincorth would pass absolutely to Mrs. Drewitt, who would thus be left at liberty to contract a

second marriage, and to will the house and demesne to whom she pleased.

"Further, it would render your chances of repayment almost indefinite, Kincorth being the gem of the property; indeed, the result of the whole arrangement would be to place Kincorth beyond the reach of Mr. Drewitt's creditors; and though there is no doubt but that he would bitterly repent his imprudence in after years, at the present moment any remonstrance on my part would only tend to produce an estrangement between us.

"I want nothing except what is fair, and certainly think as the lady has no fortune of her own, that some settlement is desirable. But an equitable settlement is one thing, and making over an entire estate to a stranger, another.

"However, I now leave the matter entirely in your hands, to act as you think best, *for you are the only person who can interfere with advantage to all parties*, and shall only beg that you will in any case consider this letter as strictly confidential.

"Trusting your health is re-established,

"I remain, dear sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"MAXWELL DREWITT.

"P.S.—I am at present staying with my friend Mr. Thomas Ryan, and shall feel obliged by your directing me here *under cover* to him."

"So you have finished at last, Max?" remarked the attorney, as his visitor commenced folding up his letter. "I think the sky must be going to fall when you take to the quill. Surely you have not gone and done it?"

"Gone and done what?" demanded the younger man, hurriedly.

"Put your foot in your fortune—made a fool of yourself—fallen in love."

"Fallen in nonsense!" retorted Mr. Drewitt. "No, Tim, I'm not in love with anybody, unless it be with myself."

"Ah! that's best. You will have no rivals there," replied the lawyer; which remark Maxwell affected not to hear.

"You are not writing love-letters, then?" persisted Mr. Ryan.

"Not I, faith; the sort of love-letters I want to fall in with are money letters. Thank God, I am not such a fool as you are, Tim."

"You are thankful for small mercies," was the

retort, uttered as Mr. Drewitt reached the door. "Are you off in a huff? Well, good-bye—but stay—when shall I see you again about the election?"

"Damn the election!" replied the young hypocrite. "Do you think I have nothing to interest me but drunken voters and lying candidates? I'll come when it suits me; and besides, I have not yet made up my mind whether I will be your man or not."

"You had better, then, lose no time about making it up," snapped back Ryan; "for Sache and his people are in the field already, and we ought to be there too."

"That is your affair," said Drewitt, as he passed out into the hall. "Adieu, my dear fellow, *au revoir!*" And this time he banged the door after him and was fairly off.

"Some day," soliloquized the lawyer, "some day, Maxwell Drewitt, I shall pay you out in your own coin. Some day when you stand in no need of me, nor I of you, then we shall be equals—then we shall have many an old score to settle. Meanwhile——"

He went back to his work, leaving the re-

mainder of the sentence unspoken; and as it would be but waste of time for us to follow his thoughts, we will step out into the bright sunshine, and track Mr. Drewitt's indolent footsteps home.

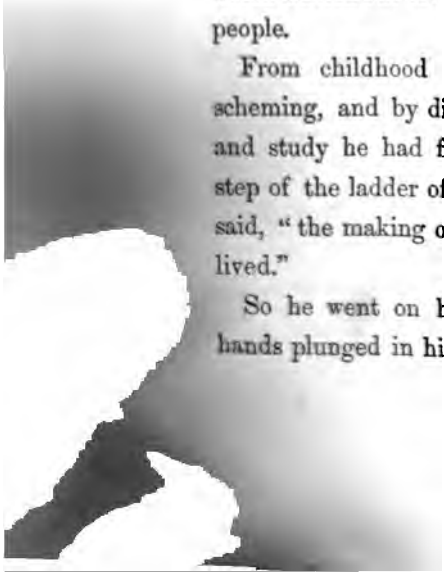
CHAPTER II.

MAXWELL'S LITTLE GAME.

VERY leisurely Mr. Maxwell Drewitt lounged along, for it was part of that young man's creed to work rather with his head than with his body. In that caldron he was eternally brewing something which turned out food for him, and poison for other people.

From childhood he had been plotting and scheming, and by dint of long thought and care and study he had finally reached almost the top step of the ladder of hypocrisy, and was, as Ryan said, "the making of as great a scoundrel as ever lived."

So he went on his way very slowly, with his hands plunged in his pockets. Kicking the small



stones ruthlessly before him, he went along the road leading to Duranmore, where, having posted his letter, he turned aside from the regular thoroughfare and descended to the beach, along which there was a path, though a circuitous one, home.

Sometimes he looked over the bay; but more generally he kept his eyes riveted on the ground.

Written on the sands he saw the story of his future life traced out—riches, prosperity, success; he beheld them all. There were obstacles, but he crushed them; impediments, but he removed them; foes, but he annihilated them.

"Yes, yes," he cried at last, halting suddenly, and looking away towards the hills that rose to heaven—"Yes, yes, Kincorth, you shall yet be mine—you and many a fair property beside; but you in especial, because I have sworn that neither man nor devil shall keep you from me. And shall a woman? No, before God!"

And the veins came swelling up in his forehead as he stretched out one clenched hand towards Kincorth, and registered his oath.

There lay his home—his home where he lived a

dependent—which was his, only so long as his uncle's charity chose to give him the shelter of its roof.

Look at it, reader, intently as he did, for it was destined to bring agony unto many hearts, to curse many lives, to peril some souls.

Kincorth! there was not a lovelier spot in Ireland; and is not that almost equivalent to saying there was not a lovelier spot in the wide world?

Halfway up a hill stood the house, backed by dark plantations, surrounded by woods and long belts of trees, and verdant fields and trickling streams. It was built of the blue granite for which Galway is noted, and some Drewitt had in other days erected a porch of black marble, around the pillars of which wreathed roses and fuchsias and myrtles.

There was the flower-garden, with its hedges of sweetbriar and evergreens, with its baskets of wicker-work filled with mignonette.

There were rose-trees covered with buds, and little wild Scotch bushes that crept close to the ground, and strewed it with a carpet of white and yellow leaves. There were perfumed

syringas, Italian broom, and barberry-trees, and beds of tulips.

There was a fountain in the centre where the supply of water never failed, and creepers and passion-flowers and honeysuckles grew about the inclosure at their own sweet will.

Kincorth had also its glen and waterfall, and at the top of the fall there stood a dilapidated summer-house, from which you could see away and away over the sea and the land. The trackless ocean and the distant mountains, the villages and hamlets below, and the dashing water near at hand—all were visible from this place, which was made of fir, and ornamented with shells, and shaded with sycamore and chesnut trees.

Then there was the old entrance, built of the same dark stone as the house, half covered with wild white roses, whilst the lodge looked brilliant in its scarlet deckings of pyracanthus, the blossoms of which mixed among the white buds that were straggling about everywhere, and trying to effect an entrance even at the latticed windows.

There were holes in the roof and breakages in the wall; but trees shaded the one, and wild flowers concealed the other; and Kincorth, with

all its dilapidations — with its ruined buildings, and trailing brambles, and unmown grass, and unpruned trees—looked beautiful in the dancing sunshine.

"And it was this place he wanted to settle on her, and secure from me," muttered Maxwell, as he entered the drive, across which the branches of the dark trees met and formed a sort of cathedral roof; and again he paused, and with arms folded across his chest, with his lips tightly pressed together, and his dark brows bent down, looked up at the house once more.

Look at him now, reader. Would you like to be an obstacle in his path? Would you care to be a thing in his way? Cannot you see he would stamp you into the earth as he stamps his heel into the gravel? Would it not be an awful thing to have to plead to that man for mercy?—to hear him answer you with that mocking devil in his eyes, out of those thin, relentless lips?

He is young now: what will he be when he is old? He is just starting on life's journey: what will he be when the road has been traversed — when the world has hardened him —when experience has matured him? If you come on to

the end, you shall see what he is like when the raven hair is grey, and the keen eyes dulled, and the devil within satisfied—you shall see. Meantime he stands with the evening sunbeams making their way through the trees and falling aslant on his figure, and lighting up the green and beautiful sward and the plotting, scheming, wary man whose heart was full of bitterness, whose soul was full of hate.

Kincorth should have been his! If primogeniture were worth anything—if being the eldest son of the eldest son entitled a man to name and land and houses — Maxwell Drewitt ought to have been master of Kincorth, and Archibald should have been eking out existence somewhere else as best he could.

What had George Drewitt done that his father should cut him off? In the natural course George Drewitt would have succeeded Nicholas Drewitt, Maxwell's grandfather, save for one deadly sin which he committed. He married a nobody, and a Roman Catholic; and though he tried to keep his indiscretion a secret, it came finally to his father's ears, who cut him off with a shilling on the spot.

"I would as soon you had married the devil,

sir!" thundered the old man; and before very long poor Nicholas Drewitt found he might almost as soon have mated with that objectionable personage as with his wife, who, fortunately perhaps for all parties, died in giving birth to her fourth child, leaving George Drewitt at liberty to marry again if he pleased.

But George Drewitt did not please; he lived to get his shilling certainly, and to see his brother Archibald owner of Kincorth; he lived to move himself and his children back as guests to the old place which he had expected to possess; and then he quietly slipped out of this world, leaving Maxwell and his sisters to be provided for by their uncle, a man full of good intentions, who offered to see to them as if they were his own boys and girls.

"I promise you, George, so long as I have sixpence they shall share it. I swear it, and you may die happy," he said to the dying man; who, whether he died happy or not, accepted the promise and departed, leaving Archibald Drewitt to perform his good intentions if he could.

It is something more than probable that the owner of Kincorth fulfilled his promise strictly to

the letter, though his own embarrassments and wretched mismanagement made it impossible for him to carry out the scheme he had proposed to himself in the spirit.

"I will put aside a certain amount," he determined, "and devote it to Maxwell's education and to portioning his sisters." A good resolution, and perhaps only fair, but one which Mr. Drewitt found he could never carry into practice.

He would have done just the same by his own children; he would have planned all manner of good things for their benefit, and then he would have let them grow up as he let his nephews and nieces grow up—uneducated, untrained, unprovided for.

The curse of the Drewitts, improvidence, was on him, and the consequence was that, though Maxwell Drewitt and his sisters had food and shelter out of their grandfather's property, they had little more.

Maxwell was not sent to college nor the girls to school. Ready money was one of those things which Mr. Drewitt only knew by name; of himself he had no acquaintance with it. That

George Drewitt's family did not grow up idiots was attributable rather to their own natural cleverness than to any advantages of society or education provided for them by their uncle. Kincorth was swamped with debt. Every blade of grass, every ear of corn, was due to some one ere ever it lifted its head above ground; the description given to Ryan by Maxwell of the state of things at his uncle's was not exaggerated in the slightest, and while duns and bailiffs besieged the old home of the Drewitts, Maxwell looked on, and gnashed his teeth, and thought how, if *he* had the management, Kincorth should soon be clear of debt and the Drewitts rear their heads in the county once again.

From his mother he had inherited a clear clever head—a head calculated to look closely and warily after the interests of No. 1. His hospitality would not have carried him away; his generosity would never have made him a poorer man; and it was natural perhaps for such a temper to be irritated with the senseless prodigality of his uncle's *ménage*, and to feel more angry at what Mr. Drewitt had left undone than grateful for that which he had performed.

Above all, Maxwell Drewitt had been brought up a martyr; since boyhood he had thought his uncle a usurper, himself the lawful heir. With that love for the first-born which is so distinguishing a feature of the Irish, his nurse had always regarded him as "wronged," and had taught him to believe himself so. We read in a very ancient book that when Jacob put his hand on the head of Ephraim, Joseph was displeased, and just so the mass of the poorer population, much as they liked Archibald Drewitt, still considered that the boy had been hardly done by, and that he was the rightful owner of all the broad acres that went sloping to the sea.

With this idea Maxwell grew up: he had been done out of the estate by his grandfather; he was being kept out of it by his uncle, but the day must come when the property would revert to him. He was the heir. Kincorth must eventually return to the only son of the eldest son—and then—

Then all at once came the news that Mr. Drewitt was about to marry.

"And if he marry," thought Maxwell Drewitt, as he lay awake and tossed about from side to side

of his bed; "and if he marry—and if he have sons—where am I?"

That was the question Archibald Drewitt ought to have considered when he adopted the children, but which he had never thought about, first or last.

"What was to become of them?" girls who could never earn enough to buy shoes to their feet? A young man who could ride across country—bring down his bird—dance all night—walk all day—but who knew nothing likely to put a guinea in his pocket—what was to become of him?—"What was to become of them?"

I echo the question which Maxwell Drewitt put to himself as he lay thinking out all manner of disagreeable and evil thoughts in the darkness.

All the stories he had read and scoffed at of self-made men came into his head. "Why should not a gentleman's son do well too? Why should not a Drewitt and an Irishman make money if he could? What the devil could there be in those English people that made them seem able to turn the very dirt under their feet to gold? Could *he* do nothing? Was there no El Dorado to which he might turn his steps? If he had Kincorth, could

he not make money out of it? And if he tried the same scheme with any other place, might he not do well with that?"

And Maxwell Drewitt sprang out of bed as he thought of this, and looked down over the trees, away and away towards Duranmore, which lay by the sea-shore, looking dark and disconsolate in the first dawn of morning.

He looked beyond Duranmore—at something he saw in his mind's eye, but which certainly his outward vision could not have presented to him. "I will have that," he said, and he went back to bed again and fell asleep as calmly and peacefully as a child.

From that night the young man formed his plans. Ready money he, like his uncle, had none, and like his uncle also he was considerably in debt. He had no property save some forty acres of freehold land that came to him through his maternal grandfather, and which, having been let during his minority to a farmer, were now available if Maxwell chose to give him the usual notice. The land, however, was poor and unproductive, and though there was a house on the ground, it had been left to go to rack and

ruin for so long a time that it was almost uninhabitable.

So far the future was unpromising enough. Poor and involved, with no profession, with no cash in hand, with no property save a neglected piece of barren land, value certainly not exceeding 25*l.* a-year—how could the man push his way to fortune?

It was not a cheerful prospect for any one, but still Maxwell Drewitt looked out over it bravely, and hour by hour, and day by day, perfected his schemes.

He would be idle no longer—he would work, he would be a rich man, when Archibald Drewitt was a beggar. Kincorth should NOT pass away from him. His uncle should yet be glad to give over the whole place and receive an allowance from his nephew. It would take him, say ten years to compass this end, and then he would paper and paint Kincorth from garret to cellar; he would give every old servant notice; he would keep the gardens and grounds in such order that Kincorth should be the talk of all the county; and when he had got his own again he would marry—he would marry birth, money, and rank, and take his

leisure under the shadow of his vine and his fig-tree.

In the middle of this day-dream came Ryan's announcement of his uncle's intention to settle Kincorth upon his wife; and it was the thought of the possibility of such a settlement being effected that made Maxwell Drewitt stand still as he entered the drive, and look eagerly, longingly over Kincorth.

There came a day when he looked over it with different eyes, when the netted sunbeams fell aslant on the figure of a bowed and broken man; when, satiated with possession and wearied of all he had struggled and sinned to obtain, Maxwell Drewitt walked feebly under the shadow of those self-same trees, thinking not of this world, wherein he had laid house to house and acre to acre, but with a terrible dread, with a horrible affright, of that other, to which the treasures of earth may not be carried.

But on the summer evening of which I am speaking youth was present and age afar off. He was strong, he knew neither ache nor pain, life was all before him, it was the spring of his year, the time of budding promise, of fearless hope. He

had no dread of anything save of Kincorth being placed beyond his reach, and he had but little fear of that, for when he finished his reverie, and walked on towards the house, he muttered—

"I think I have scotched that wheel. Old Turner has too tight a hold over my good uncle to let that cock fight. I would give five pounds to see the old fellow's face when he reads my letter." And Maxwell Drewitt laughed aloud as he pictured to himself the Quaker's consternation on receipt of his communication.

Had Samuel Turner been anything except a "friend" he would have relieved his mind by swearing; as it was he merely said "infamous," and went straight off to his solicitor.

After a consultation with that gentleman, who comforted him exceedingly, he sent back the following reply to his young correspondent:—

"Ashton-under-Lyne, June—, 18—.

"FRIEND MAXWELL,

"Thee hast done quite right, and acted (an unusual thing for youths of thine age and country) with sound sense and good feeling. Be satisfied I shall do the best I can for thee and

thy sisters. I grieve that thy uncle, a sensible man, should think at his time of life of marrying a young wife, and she a fashionable woman from London.

"Thy sincere friend,

"SAMUEL TURNER.

"If thee should turn thy attention at any time to business, I would try to advance thy views if in my power."

Which letter, coming to Mr. Ryan amongst a number of others, was opened by him in mistake, and read right through by intention. He read it once, he read it twice, and then laying it down, he said to himself, "So this is your dodge, Maxwell Drewitt, is it?—this is the first step." And when Maxwell himself appeared he handed him the epistle, adding, "You are a deal cleverer than I thought you. You will——"

"What the devil, sir, do you mean by opening my letters?" burst forth his visitor, the blood rushing up warm and red even through his dark complexion. "I tell you what it is, Ryan," he went on, "for many a less thing than this a fellow has had a bullet in his skull."

"Hold your tongue, my son, and don't talk like a fool," interrupted Mr. Ryan. "How the deuce am I to know a letter is not for me till I have read it? On my honour I was half way through the thing before it occurred to me there was any blunder."

"I don't believe you," said Drewitt.

"For less than that many a man has been sent into kingdom-come at twelve paces," retorted Ryan; "but there is one blessed comfort in the affair, which is, I don't care whether you believe me or not. There now, boy, sit down, and don't make such a confounded row about the matter. Honour among thieves, you know; and I am not going to turn informer."

"You are an unprincipled scoundrel," Maxwell persisted, "to open another person's letter."

"Oh, for Heaven's sake! drop the saint," exclaimed his friend. "Maxwell Drewitt talking about principle, and Satan reproving sin, always seem to me to sail together in the same boat. I tell you I did NOT open the letter of malice aforethought. Now I have made all the apology I intend to make, and if you do not like to take it you may leave it."

"When a letter comes to you under cover, you cannot open it by accident."

"Hang the lad!" exclaimed Ryan, pettishly, "the thing did not come under cover at all. There is the whole cursed concern." And he flung letter and envelope to their rightful owner, who, turning up the latter, read:

"MAXWELL DREWITT,
"Care of T. Ryan,
"Inchnagawn Cottage,
"near Duranmore, Galway, Ireland.

"What an idiot the old fellow must be. I told him as——"

"I know all you said as well as if I had seen your letter," interrupted Ryan. "Besides, what does it matter about my knowing you wrote to Turner? Whenever I heard Mrs. Drewitt's jointure was cut down, I should have been sure you had put your foot in it somehow. Indeed, Max Drewitt, you are a very promising young man, and your uncle has every right to be proud of you."

"He is proud of nothing just at present, I fancy," answered the other, recovering his temper

at this neatly-turned compliment, and flinging himself into a chair as he spoke. "I left him wishing all Quakers and lawyers in the hottest of hot quarters. We send for our letters, you know, and so get them earlier than you do; and you may depend the opening of the bag made an uncommon fuss at Kincorth this morning."

"Let the cat out?" suggested Mr. Ryan.

"No, faith. If it had I might have walked. As it was I had nothing but black looks and short answers. Turner has lost no time about the affair though, has he?"

"Trust a Quaker for that," said Mr. Ryan.

"It seems to me," remarked Mr. Drewitt, "that a dislike to losing money is common to both churchmen and Quakers; but really you should see my uncle, he is worth travelling from here to Kincorth to get a sight of."

"What will he do now?" inquired his companion.

"How should I know? write, I suppose, to his father-in-law elect, and tell him unforeseen circumstances, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, prevent his fulfilling his liberal intentions; or he may try to raise money to pay off Turner. He coul

scarcely do it in the time though," added Maxwell, reflectively.

"Scarcely," acquiesced Ryan. "But now, I say Max, tell me why is this woman marrying your uncle? You declare she is young, pretty, well-born—she can therefore scarcely be in her last wonder yet. What is the attraction?"

"Kincorth," sneered his visitor, pulling his chair up to the table as he spoke, with a violence which spilt the contents of the lawyer's tea-cup over his hand.

"You don't think she loves him, then?" persisted the other, as he wiped the tea off his sleeve and wristband.

"Why, what on earth should she love him for?" asked Mr. Drewitt.

"I cannot tell—perhaps because he is frank, handsome, generous, amiable. Although he is nearly twenty years older than you, Master Maxwell Drewitt, I know if I were a woman, which thank heaven I am not, I should fall in love with him sooner than with you."

"You cannot tell what you might do if you were a woman," answered the youth, thus plainly complimented; "but in this case what I tell you is

true. The Colonel, her father, is poor as a church-mouse; he has this daughter single, and no sons; his income dies with him. It follows, therefore, that the girls must either marry or starve, and there is Kincorth for the one who is left. A pretty little catch it sounds. Fifteen thousand a year, with no encumbrance that she knows of, is worth looking pretty and pleasant for, eh, Ryan?"

"In theory," replied Ryan, "but not in fact. If they are playing such a game it is a pity they should lose it; my creed is that whatever people marry for, whether for love or money, or position or birth, they should get it; and they have mistaken the cards over in England if they are reckoning on Kincorth as a trump. Suppose, however, Max, that you are wrong, and that this Miss Dyak is marrying your uncle not for love of Kincorth, but for love of himself."

"Love of folly!" was the civil answer. "Why, man, you are turning spooney all at once."

"No I am not," said Ryan. "Mr. Drewitt is still very handsome; he is a thoroughbred Irish gentleman, just the sort to take a girl's fancy. Everywhere but at Kincorth he is as lively and talkative as a boy. I do not see why she

should not love him; and if she do, God help her!"

"And wherefore?" demanded his visitor, who was employing himself in cramming hot buttered toast down his throat—"and wherefore?"

"Because love is too valuable and scarce a commodity to be wasted," answered the lawyer, oracularly; "and further, if Miss Dyak be a woman who can love, she will probably feel inclined to do her duty, and if she do her duty, why God help her again, I say."

"You mean with Sue?" This was interrogative.

"I mean with everything: all is wrong at Kincorth — master, nephew, nieces, servants, labourers, tenants, everything!"

"I'd soon make all right if I had the management," remarked Maxwell.

"Old maids' children and bachelors' wives," sneered Ryan.

"I keep every soul about the place in order when my uncle is away," returned the other, hotly. "I should like to see the man that would disobey my orders if I were master. I'd undertake to tame any dog, horse, or woman in a week. But what is

the matter with you, Ryan, you are as white as a sheet?"

Mr. Ryan did not answer: he got up and walked to the window; after standing there for a minute he came back and reseated himself at the table.

"What ails you?" persisted his companion, "are you not well?"

"No, I am not," was the reply. "I feel as weak as a cat at times, and if I were standing in the biggest room at Kincorth I should seem suffocating when the fit takes me. I don't intend to work at home at all for the future, and I wish you would come and see me at the office, after Monday next, when you want to see me."

"Upon my soul, you are civil. I like that," said his visitor. "Why do you want me to call at the office? Why do you not want me to come here?"

"Because I want my house to be my home after this week," was the reply.

"You are going to be married!" exclaimed Mr. Drewitt. "Saul is among the prophets."

"I wish I were married," answered the lawyer, "if only for my poor little sister's sake. She is coming back to me now her aunt is dead, and

I must shift for her as best I can. That is the reason I want you to call at the office. Do you understand?"

"You are afraid I might fall in love with her, I suppose," laughed Maxwell.

"No; but I am afraid, nothing being impossible, of her falling in love with you, and," went on Mr. Ryan, speaking rapidly and, I might almost add, fiercely, "as you and I know one another so well that we need not stand on ceremony, I may say that although I do not pretend to be either a very good or a very scrupulous man, I had rather put the child in her grave than give her to you."

"I do not know what may be the fashion in your rank," said Maxwell Drewitt, "but in ours we do not consider it the thing to refuse our sisters till they are asked for, and I shall certainly never ask you for yours. It is all very well for me to know you, but Miss Bourke is a different affair altogether. When I take to running in double harness it shall be with something more thoroughbred. Tit for tat is fair play. Never look so cross about being hit back, man. Let us get to business. I am your man throughout the election

—at least I think I am; and if you like, whenever my uncle leaves for England, I will go canvassing."

"How many voters can you insure?" asked Ryan, "because if you can bring nobody but yourself, I don't know that you will be of much use."

"Bless my heart, how independent we are all of a sudden!" exclaimed young Drewitt. "Shall I go and tell Pryor's committee you think me a bird not worth catching? How would it be with Waller's agency then? What have you got to say to that?"

"Simply what I said before—a single voter is not worth the having, even though he be a Drewitt. How many can you bring with you?" And the pair looked straight into one another's eyes as Ryan finished.

Two dogs might have looked in the same way before flying, with hungry teeth, each at the throat of his fellow; but the two men drew off. If Drewitt had not changed his tone there would have been a quarrel, but the young man spied danger, and answered quietly enough—

"That depends on the cash. I can bribe where you could not. I can get refractory fellows out of

the way. I can do lots of things if you make it worth my while. In short, I will do anything you please, on two conditions."

"There was only one the other day," remarked the lawyer.

"There are two now, though," was the reply. "First, the farm, which I suppose we may call settled; next, I must second Pryor."

"Why——"

"I have a crow to pluck with Sache, and I can then have it out with him," answered Mr. Drewitt. "Even you have no idea how much I can help you if I choose. Pitted against me, my uncle has no chance. He is an intruder—a man who has no earthly right to be at Kincorth. He has brought me up as his heir until now, and now he takes a young wife to himself, so as to cut me out for ever. On principle I am opposing him. Contrary to my own interests I am leaving the old ship of the Drewitts. If he would only turn me out of the house it would be the best thing possible for the Liberal party. Would not it be capital for us? Heavens! what fools people are, and what humbug they will swallow!"

Having concluded which complimentary speech

relative to the understandings of his fellows, the young man stuffed his hand into his coat pocket, and produced thence a book, which Ryan seized eagerly.

"There are their voters," remarked his friend, "and a precious job I had to get it. There you have them all—dead, doubtful, and certain. Now how many of our own dead can we personate, and how many of their doubtfuls can we get?"

"That depends greatly on you; but are we not losing time most needlessly? Sache and Munks and Marsden and Tooley and your uncle have been hard at work for days past, and here are we, with all the landed interests against us, doing nothing—literally nothing."

"True; but when once I do start I won't let the grass grow under my feet. There has been many an election at Duranmore, but this will cap everything. I hear my uncle is going to bring the new mistress of Kincorth home right away, and there are to be election balls and dinners and Heaven knows what besides, up at the old place. I should have thought the excitement of marrying ought to have been enough for him, without any

extra fuss; but Archibald Drewitt is like no other human being on earth."

"There is not a man in the county much better liked at any rate," remarked Mr. Ryan, drily. "I wish we had him on our side."

"Stuff!" exclaimed Maxwell; "can't you take the book and let us get to business?"

"It is impossible to refuse a request urged with such politeness," answered the lawyer, moving over to his writing-table, indistinctly catching, as he did so, Maxwell Drewitt's comment, which was, "Damn your politeness."

CHAPTER III.

THE MASTER OF KINCORTH.

ARCHIBALD DREWITT, Esq., of Kincorth, was born a mistake. He said so himself, and therefore there can be no discourtesy in my repeating the observation. Whether different circumstances and a different training might have rectified nature's error, it is hard to say. Circumstances and training did nothing for him, and accordingly a mistake he remained to the end of the chapter.

"Unstable is water, thou shalt not excel;" that was the pleasant programme sketched out for him. "Unstable as water, he did not excel," and he made everybody who had the misfortune to be connected with him, miserable in consequence.

"Unstable as water!" Good heavens! how could

a man, not, to be a bad man, have more said in his dispraise!

Unstable as water, his purposes flowed backwards and forwards perpetually. With youth, health, ample means, fair talents, he started at six-and-twenty with as fair prospects of happiness as need to be possessed by any man. Life was before him,—life with its objects, its pleasures, its duties; but the duties he never fulfilled, the pleasures he never tasted, the objects he never attained. At twenty-seven existence seemed a vast conception; at forty-one it was an unfinished, unsatisfactory, miserable failure.

God deliver us, friends, from such a result! God grant that, when the noon of our life comes, it may find some work finished, some duty discharged, so that as the sorrowful sunset draws near—as the darkening twilight and the darker night approach, we may be able to look back on the bright mid-day hours without tears of anguish, without the bitterest thought humanity knows, of having lost time, which, even with all eternity before us, we may never retrieve—never—for ever!

Unstable as water, the force with which the current of his feelings hurried him along to an

object one moment, was only equalled by the violence of the flood by which he was distracted from it the next.

Over the sea of life he floated—a boat without a rudder, a mariner without a star—tossed hither and thither by every wave of passion, by every caprice and impulse. Almost continually he kept within sight of the promised land of peace and comfort and content; but never once, ah! never, did he manage to touch its shores.

Always planning, never executing. Always commencing, never completing. Always borrowing, never repaying. Always thinking, never acting. Always proposing, never performing, he spent the whole of his boyhood, manhood, and age in sending down lost opportunities and good intentions to that place which is paved with the one and roofed with the other.

It was not, I need scarcely add, that he meant to break his word or intended to disappoint any living being; it was merely that his theory proved better than his practice, that purposing and promising to do everything he finished, like many another, by doing nothing.

Unstable as water, there was not a trait in his

character but was counteracted by some diametrically opposite peculiarity. He was not religious, yet he was superstitious and bigoted. He hated the Roman Catholics, yet he was always asking the priest to dinner; he was prodigal, but still gave little away; he was impatient, yet bore disappointment as calmly as a philosopher; he was popular, yet always at feud with some one. He was by turns energetic and indolent, kind and harsh, forbearing and provoking. His abstract ideas on the subject of obedience were excellent, yet his servants and nieces ran counter to his orders before his face. He was a stickler for birth and blood, yet he supported with heart and soul Mr. Sache—a parvenu, and blackguard. He was honourable, yet he could never pay a debt to the day; his bills had always to be lifted by a friend, the interest on his mortgages was always falling behind, somebody was for ever suffering through, or being embarrassed by him. He loved punctuality, yet he could not keep an appointment to the hour. He was never out of hot water, yet he looked as well and happy as though care and duns and anxiety were meat and drink to him. He never had a settled plan, yet he would not adopt

any other person's scheme. He was for ever asking advice and never following it; in brief, Maxwell Drewitt described his uncle to a nicety when he said that he was "consistent in nothing except his inconsistency."

But notwithstanding all his faults, Archibald Drewitt was better liked than many a better man. He had such frank, gracious manners; he was such a thorough gentleman in his ideas, his appearance, his bearing; he had such a knack of turning a compliment, of saying pleasant things as if he meant them, of implying that the man to whom he was talking at the moment was his friend of friends—his friend beyond all other friends, that it was impossible to resist him, as impossible to remain cold and calculating in his presence, as it is for ice to keep from thawing in the sun. Let a creditor be ever so angry, an interview with Mr. Drewitt satisfied him. Those who had made vows concerning paper lent their name to the owner of Kincorth; even Samuel Turner, an Englishman, a Quaker, and a merchant, who, for his sins, had once enjoyed the hospitality of the Irish gentleman, did bills for him, and was wont to lie awake whole nights wondering how they were to be met, till Mr.

Drewitt cut the knot of his perplexity by a long and pathetic letter setting forth how that he could not take up the bill, stating why he could not do so, explaining when he should have money in abundance, and imploring Mr. Turner meanwhile to do what was needful under the circumstances. "Please renew," was the burden of Mr. Drewitt's everlasting song, a burden with which many business men are conversant; but very few business men meet with such correspondents as fell to the lot of the owner of Kincorth.

It was entirely his own fault getting into debt, but people forgot that and pitied him for it.

There never was a man who drew so largely on the sympathies and purses of his friends, and yet his cheques never came back dishonoured. Liking was not the word to express the feeling Mr. Drewitt inspired in those with whom he came in contact. He was loved, he was idolized, and yet he left no track of good deeds behind him as he walked through life. Even his charity, which consisted in letting every tramp who listed walk into the kitchen at Kincorth, and drink a basin of milk, or toss off a glass of poteen, before he trudged away with his wallet full of broken victuals, was as

purposeless and as useless as every other action of his life. He helped no man who was helping himself; it was not the struggling tradesman, the hard-working labourer who benefited by Mr. Drewitt's careless open-handedness; rather, it was the worthless vagabond, the lazy idle beggar, who fattened on the waste and profusion of Kincorth.

Open house to all comers: covers for a score if a score liked to drop in; great sirloins of beef, fis as fine as ever swam in the sea, wine of the best, whisky of the strongest, brandy that had never paid the king a halfpenny, claret that was in the same predicament; "cead mille failthe!" uttered in a rich soft Irish brogue—this was the order of things in the parlour; whilst in the kitchen there was a bit and a sup for all who chose to claim hospitality; for hungry dogs and for hungry men and women. There was the heat of the piled-up turf fire for the lame and halt who stood looking over the half door, muttering, "God save all here!" There was the cup of tea for the deaf and dumb, who, by reason of their misfortunes, were considered able to read the fortunes of others, and who kept all the maids from their work by prophesying in signs and

gestures the advent of certain husbands, probable journeys, possible misfortunes.

If the prayer of the poor avail, Archibald Drewitt should have been a happy man; for never a day passed over without "God bless him" being repeated thirty or forty times. To be sure, the lips that blessed would have cursed even more volubly had help been refused; but the help never was refused. It was *but* a handful of meal, *but* a plate of broken meat, *but* the bag of potatoes, *but* the screw of tea, *but* the blessing lightly earned, the curse readily averted; and still Archibald Drewitt did not prosper, still the property went like the house, like the grounds, like the porter's lodge, like the entrance—to rack and ruin.

"Would you grudge the craturs a bite to keep life in them?" asked one of the old servants one day when Maxwell Drewitt had made some remark concerning the number of beggars he saw about the place.

"I'd make the rascals work and earn it," he answered.

"Yer grandfather, God rest his sowl! would niver have made a spache like that about poor done men," she replied. "There was many a one

thought he had done wrong,—I thrust he is now in glory—in passing by his eldest son to lave the place to the masther; but there is one thing sure and certain, that it is a blessing for the poor you did not get it, Masther Maxwell."

"The poor had best make the most of their blessing then while it lasts," remarked the young man; "for a man cannot go on feeding a county for ever, and my uncle is making ducks and drakes of Kincorth as fast as he knows how."

"Well, Masther Maxwell, it's not for you to be saying anything about who he feeds."

"Because he has fed me, I suppose; because he has kept me like the beggars in poverty and idleness," remarked Maxwell. "I owe him no thanks for that, Nannie, rather the reverse."

"I always heard that Nicholas Drewitt was a terribly wise old gentleman, but I am sure of it now," answered Nannie.

"Well, do you be a wise old woman," recommended Mr. Drewitt, junior, "and make a purse for yourself and keep it; for I swear to you, Nannie, that if ever I am owner of Kincorth I'll clear it of all the vermin that are eating the heart out of the corn now."

And with this Maxwell Drewitt turned on his heel and walked away, thinking, "If ever it do come to me it will be valueless, and I—I would have kept it together; I would have made Kincorth something worth talking about. Curse him," said the young man stopping suddenly. "Curse him for a fool!"

It was hard. His uncle ought either to have cast him off or provided for him suitably. The very beggars had almost as much good of the estate as he, and they had no claim on Kincorth as he had—a claim in equity though not in law.

Why did the man want to marry now? Had he not been in love fourteen years before? and was not one love enough for such a temperament for life? Had he not been jilted? Had he not stood with the muzzle of a pistol touching his forehead, when his brother found him? and did not the pistol miss fire? and had not the pair a fight for the weapon, which ended in George Drewitt knocking the owner of Kincorth down and sending for a doctor to bleed him till he fainted?

"I wish he would take the same notion again," thought Maxwell, "and that I had the loading. He would not fall in love a third time;" and the

young man sneered bitterly as he remembered his father's weakness in interfering to save the life that stood between him and Kincorth, as he thought of all the oaths Archibald Drewitt had sworn when the fever passed away about dividing the estate, about giving his brother a share, about all he would do for the children, about how he would never marry, never look with love on the face of any woman again, but live single, and bring up Maxwell and his sisters as though they were his own son and daughters.

If an amiable man does us a wrong we hate him fifty times more than if he were as black as Erebus—hate him because the world joins issue with us on the question. Had Archibald Drewitt been like Maxwell Drewitt, nephew and uncle could have fought the matter out on equal social grounds; but as it was society could never be made to believe that Archibald Drewitt could be wrong, for which reason Maxwell Drewitt hated him.

It was hard. I can imagine no cross harder to bear than that of a man like Maxwell Drewitt placed in Maxwell Drewitt's position.

In England such a position would have been bad enough; in England, where any one with

courage, and industry, and cleverness, may eventually make his way; but in Ireland, in Connemara, in a country where trade is looked down upon, where work is ignominy, where there are but two classes—the very rich who do nothing, and the very poor who do as little as they can help, my reader, think of it!—think of a gentleman beggar—of a man who had all the instincts of his class—who looked upon a merchant as an inferior being—who had been brought up to no profession—whose proud stomach could never have brooked the idea of business—who laughed scornfully at Samuel Turner's well-meant postscript—who would have tried to keep up the name and the property and the family dignity,—and who was still a pauper.

Think of it. He was hardly done by, and all the more hardly, perhaps, because Kincorth belonged to an interloper—to one of those younger sons who, since the time of the patriarchs, have been continually putting the noses of elder sons out of joint.

Never a Drewitt before had thought of making money; but Maxwell was determined to make it now. He was born in advance of his age; the

men of thirty years ago did not think much of draining, of subsoils, of top-dressing, of the rotation of crops, and for that matter indeed to look at Connemara now, one would think that the men of the present day thought as little of these matters as their predecessors.

Once Maxwell had visited England—once he had seen corn growing, where for centuries previously nothing had thriven save rushes and reeds and wild fowl. He had asked how the change was effected, how the morass was turned into a garden, the wilderness into a fruitful plain; and while his host told him he thought of Galway—thought of the rushes and the bogs there—thought as only an Irishman can think of his native country, and of the best way of bettering his condition.

In England, too, he saw smiling cottages, well-fed men and women, children with clothes on their back and shoes to their feet. Again he asked for information, and again he was told that these men, who were better clad than the best tenants who reluctantly came to Kincorth in May and November, were not landholders, only labourers.

"That is it," thought Maxwell Drewitt, then only a lad; "the small farms are the curse of

Ireland. Our tenants ought to be our labourers—that is it."

And he went back, Irish like, making fun of the English for having a good dinner, and yet scorning his countrymen for being contented with potatoes and salt. It is the Irishman of thirty years ago and more I am talking about, remember. It is not to be supposed the Irishman of 1865 bears more than the faintest family resemblance to him.

At any rate, the individual whose story I am telling detested the English as English, and yet was willing to learn a lesson out of their book of prosperity. He liked the flesh-pots, but he hated the country. He loved the wealth, but he could not stand the accent. He could have horsewhipped the first Irish peasant he saw shrinking out of the way of his galloping horse, and yet he thought the English too independent.

"Look at England," he would say in Ireland, and yet in his heart, while he was in England, he loved Irish ways and Irish manners best.

He thought of those great English farmers riding their thoroughbreds, sending their daughters to boarding-schools, walking to church beside their wives, who were dressed in silks and merinos, and

then he looked into Irish hovels, where the owner of the soil—owner so far as paying his rent can make a man so—never knew what it was to eat an egg laid by his own hens, to taste butter made from his own cows' milk, year after year.

"It is all wrong," concluded Maxwell Drewitt; "these men ought to be labourers: they ought to be eating fat bacon and drinking strong ale like the English. How *do* the English make money as if it was to be picked up by the road side? Give Galway to them and in twenty years they would be advertising villa sites—villa sites"—and the young man looked away towards the mountains and smiled to think how soon the Cockneys could spoil Connemara.

"But they would live like fighting cocks out of it—they would," finished Maxwell Drewitt; "and it is a burning shame and a crying disgrace that the Irish cannot do the same."

"We do very well as we are, Max," said his uncle, when he propounded these heretical doctrines to him. "Let well alone. The Almighty never intended us to be like England or he would not have given us such an iron-bound coast. The country is different and the people are dif-

ferent and our ways are different. If you put shoes and stockings on the children they would limp along the roads. If you washed their faces and sent them to school they would cry their eyes out. If you put Davy Blake into an English farmhouse and told his wife she must keep it clean, they would be wretched. Each nation goes through the centuries its own way, as each man travels to heaven by a different road. Many a person has tried to mend us, and many a person has come to grief. Stick to your horse across country, Maxwell, and leave the rights and wrongs of Ireland to those whose business it is to study them."

Admirable advice doubtless, and kindly meant; but then the giver was a man whose way had been made for him, and the receiver had to try and make his own way as best he could. And gold mines were not common in that part of the country. Money was not lying under foot as it was reported to be in London; where, however, Colonel Dyak had not improved his opportunities any more than Mr. Archibald Drewitt had improved his, in Connemara.

No two men ever travelled to the dogs at so equal a pace as the Englishman about town and

the Irish country gentleman. They went by different roads, but their destination was the same: and yet each looked up to the other, and while Dyak thought Drewitt was rolling in wealth, Drewitt considered Dyak an individual without a care.

They had met after a fashion common enough in Galway. Colonel Dyak went there to fish, and Mr. Drewitt coming across him one day, on the shores of one of the innumerable lakes, asked him to dinner.

And Colonel Dyak accepted the invitation, and ate Mr. Drewitt's mutton and drank his claret, and rode his horses every day for six weeks; at the end of which time he insisted on carrying his host back to London with him.

Nothing loth, Mr. Drewitt went over twice, and the second time he returned to Kincorth it was as an engaged man; who by way of bettering his prospects had asked a young and portionless woman to cast in her lot with his.

There was one kind of wife who might have saved both him and Kincorth. A wife with a clear head and a strong will, able to carry things with a high hand—clever and active and determined

and economical withal, would have queened it at the old place and kept the mortgaged acres together; but, as a matter of course, Miss Dyak was gentle and loving and trusting—a woman perfectly incompetent to fight out any battle—a woman with a sweet placid face—with calm, thoughtful eyes—with smooth, glossy hair—with a soft, white, satiny skin—with a low voice—with timid, caressing manners—with no head to plan; but with a heart to be broken.

It is hard for me to write about her—hard for me to go on from this point and tell of the storms and rain that fell upon that drooping head—of the trials and crosses that bowed that poor heart before she lay down to sleep the only really peaceful slumber our poor humanity knows.

She was not the wife for Mr. Drewitt, and Mr. Drewitt was not the husband for her; but notwithstanding that, they chose to take one another for better or for worse.

There was no better to the matter, however—it was all worse; it was like everything Archibald Drewitt did or proposed to do—a mistake.

Colonel Dyak was charmed with the match, and delighted with his son-in-law elect. He had enjoyed himself greatly at Kincorth. He knew

Mr. Drewitt's horses were capital. He had landed salmon twelve pounds weight. The lakes in Galway were alive with fish: the mountains were covered with game.

"A fine country, I believe," remarked one of his club acquaintance to him. "Magnificent scenery, they tell me—monstrous properties—capable of being improved to any extent."

Whereupon Colonel Dyak broke ground.

"A fine country! Why, sir, there is not an Englishman breathing knows what a country it is; there is not a Londoner would believe in such scenery being within five hundred miles of him unless he saw it. Mountains! I couldn't tell you how high they are. Lakes! God only knows how many hundred lakes I saw in one day. Harbours! why the coast is a succession of front doors facing America. Rivers! if you turned the Thames the other way, and made it run from Yorkshire south, it would not be half so fine as the Shannon. Fuel! you can't imagine what a magnificent fire turf makes. Land! there are thousands upon thousands of acres that have never been turned up by a plough. Labour! eightpence to tenpence a day in the summer, sixpence to eightpence in the winter. Society! I never

was among a more jovial set of people in my life. Ay, that is a country! with building materials lying by the wayside, with granite roads, with marble quarries, silver mines, rock and mountain and lake and sea. You must come to Galway with me sometime and judge for yourself."

"I should like to go greatly," was the reply. "I am curious to know why such a country should not prosper." And the little Londoner took snuff, and then adjusted his double eye-glasses, thinking doubtless that he could solve the problem, which is about as dark as the Sphinx, in a scamper through Ireland.

That is one of the beauties of Ireland, I may here remark. Everybody imagines, when he begins the pleasing study of her manifold sorrows, of her excessive poverty, that he has got hold of the right end of the stick at last; that he has hit on the word with which in some remote age the puzzle was locked so carefully that no one has ever been able to open it since; and led on by this delusion, he proceeds triumphantly only to discover that the riddle seems to have no solution, that all arguments about the sister island work in a circle, and return to the same point in the end.

Colonel Dyak, however, was a man who did not trouble himself with questions of this kind. He took things as he found them: if they were well, he was pleased; if they were ill, he trusted they would right themselves in time; and if they did not right themselves, it still was no business of his; and he felt something more than satisfied with the match his daughter proposed to herself, although her intended husband's property was situated in Ireland; in a country the non-prosperity whereof puzzled the wise head of his club acquaintance.

Good fishing, good shooting, good hunting could not, however, quite reconcile Mrs. Dyak to the idea of Agnes throwing herself away upon a commoner, and that commoner a man unable to make satisfactory marriage settlements upon her.

"If she *must* marry," remarked the eldest daughter, who, on the strength of having secured a baronet, took upon herself airs in the family cabinet —"if she *must* marry a baronet, why did she not make sure that he was a rich one?"

"But your papa says, my love," put in Mrs. Dyak, mildly, "that Mr. Drewitt's income is fifteen thousand a year."

"More likely fifteen hundred," answered Lady Ebbutt.

"And he settles an estate of I think it is two thousand acres on Agnes," went on Mrs. Dyak, not heeding her daughter's remark.

"Depend upon it the estate is a mountain, mamma," said the baronet's wife.

"Well, Bertha, whether it is a mountain or not we cannot help ourselves in the matter now. Agnes and her papa have set their minds on the match; and indeed, my dear, I may tell you in confidence, that as we could not have afforded another season in town, it is a great blessing Aggy has made a choice. For we must go abroad, and what chance would there be of her marrying abroad, tell me that?"

But Lady Ebbutt declined to gratify her mother's desire: she only observed that she thought it would be better for her parents to reside in Ireland rather than on the Continent.

"Papa would like it of all things," she finished.

"I should not," answered Mrs. Dyak, and the conversation dropped.

Thus the marriage was finally agreed to by all the parties interested. As a matter of course Mrs.

Dyak protested against it, and maintained for some time sufficient coolness of demeanour to impress Mr. Drewitt with a due sense of the honour Miss Dyak had conferred upon him by accepting his hand, and the very moderate settlement that accompanied it; but in the end Mrs. Dyak gracefully gave way; and in a very fashionable church, and attended by a little crowd of bridesmaids, Archibald Drewitt and Agnes Dyak were made man and wife.

It was a very gay wedding. There were plenty of grand people in the church: there was no lack of fashionable guests at the breakfast.

Everything was in the best style. It was Colonel Dyak's last shot, and he did not spare the powder. Any one might have thought his yearly income something enormous. Even Mr. Drewitt wondered how it happened that behind such a marriage feast there should be no marriage settlement, little dreaming that if there had been, Miss Dyak would never have been permitted to marry a man who lived in Ireland, who had no house in London, or even in Dublin, who never resided abroad for any part of the year, and whose estates were embarrassed to such an extent that

only two or three people had other than the faintest idea which part of his property belonged to him and which to his mortgagees.

It was a nice fate, truly, that Agnes Dyak was robed that morning, all in pure white, to go out to meet.

"Who shall say that human sacrifices have ceased to be offered in Britain?" whispered one cynical bachelor to his neighbour, when the pair joined hands and took one another till death should part them. "Who shall say there are no victims slain on the horns of the altar now?" And the speaker laughed, and his friend laughed, and the friend said the idea was "devilish good," and the speaker thought in his heart that he had put it rather neatly, while both forgot how true many words spoken in jest may be; and neither imagined that when Agnes Drewitt walked down the long aisle a wife, she was walking on, at the same time, to endure her martyrdom.

CHAPTER IV.

COMING HOME.

WHEN a man goes a-wooing, he does not, as a rule, turn the worst side of his affairs out for the inspection of his ladye love and his ladye love's family. Rather on the contrary: he is apt to throw a little *couleur de rose* over his prospects, and to insist that all whom the matter may concern shall view the landscape through that medium, instead of by any truer light.

This had been Mr. Drewitt's policy, at all events. He had kept his advantages in the foreground—his drawbacks well in the rear. He intended to reform Kincorth, so what use could there be in talking about its previous state of wretched mismanagement? He was quite determined to make a radical change with regard to

Maxwell and his sisters; so why, when the Drewitts' soiled linen was all going straight off to the laundress, should he trouble himself to wash it in London, in the sight of the enemy?

"Only let me get this election business over," thought Mr. Drewitt, "and I will send the two younger girls to school, and try if I cannot buy or beg Maxwell a commission. Susan is my greatest difficulty. I wish to heaven somebody would marry her. I might manage a small portion."

Alas! and alas! for the good intentions unfulfilled, for the faithful promises broken, for the debt of gratitude that had now become burdensome, for the trust he had broken, for the noble plans he had never carried out.

Is there nothing pitiful to you, my reader, in the picture of this middle-aged man, whose work remained for ever undone, who had planned in youth to reap such abundant harvests, but who stood now, in the very prime and summer of his age, with the spring crops still unsown, with the fields of his life bare and barren, with the broad lands of opportunity still untilled, with his Lord's talents still unemployed—still bringing in no

interest against the day when his accounts would be required of him?

If we miss the seed time, what shall we even think of casting into the ground when our neighbours' wheat is ripening? Even such poor intentions as Mr. Drewitt now muttered to himself, in lieu of those great honest designs that he had once promised to work out for the benefit of his brother's children. Half his wealth, all his influence, all his care, had come to a vague commission for Maxwell, a possible school for Wilhelmina and Kathleen, and an uncertain fortune for the *bête noir* of the establishment, Susan Drewitt.

It was all wrong together—the time had not been redeemed, the seed had not been sown, the talent had not been put out at usury—it was all wrong; and so Archibald Drewitt found when the harvest time arrived, and there was no grain for the gathering.

But in those bright sunshiny days, when he brought home his bride, the summer sun was gladdening the earth, the autumn was afar off; and cursed with that peculiar temperament which always believes that "the future is the time to mend," Archibald Drewitt made himself happy in

the present, and still permitted his wife to view her future prospects through the medium of that stained glass to which I have already referred.

She knew, of course, that Maxwell and his sisters resided at Kincorth; and if there was anything unpleasant to hear about them she would become acquainted with it soon enough, seeing that she was travelling home as fast as a very indifferent pair of post horses could take her.

Maxwell had been right. London is a long distance from Galway now, and in the days of which I am writing it was further still.

It had cost Mr. Drewitt some ready money to get to London at all, and although he was the bridegroom, it had cost him more to get married. Elsewhere the fact has been stated that coin of the realm and Mr. Drewitt were comparative strangers—adding all of which together, the result arrived at is that a bridal tour was beyond his means, that he could only do what he did do, viz., bring home his wife with as little delay as possible.

We read that when Elijah the Tishbite fled from the wrath of Jezebel he journeyed into the wilderness, and travelled thence forty days and

forty nights, till he came to that cave in Horeb where his wanderings ended.

In the wilderness, on the mountain, the queen's anger was impotent to hurt him towards those fastnesses, the hand of that "cursed woman" was stretched out in vain.

When, in the after-time, Agnes Drewitt heard the story of the prophet recited, she always fancied that from all the haunts of men, from all the towns and cities in which Baal was worshipped, Elijah must have fled to a country like Connemara, where, beside lonely lakes, the plover whistles and the bittern cries, where desolation reigns supreme, where there is a solitude which may be heard, a silence which has a voice.

Under the shadow of those never-ending mountains they travelled on; beside those interminable lakes the road wound in and about. Away to the left were hills without end; to the right the blue conical mountains reared their heads towards heaven. In the valley—which has no end, but runs between chains of mountain, the commencement of which lies so far behind that one forgets when a view of any extent of level land was last obtained—in the valley, I say, the very genius of desolation

appeared to Mrs. Drewitt to have taken up his abode.

Here were no smiling fields, no neat farmhouses, no cows luxuriating in pleasant pastures, no gentlemen's seats, no hedges, no gardens, no homesteads. Mile after mile stretched away the valley; no turn in the road brought with it a change of scene; and often, as the road turned, far as the valley extended, nothing met the eye save lonely lakes and swiftly-flowing streams, thousands of acres of bog land, thousands more of moor, where a few sheep and a few ponies grazed at will among the blocks of granite and the huge boulders, that, becoming detached from the mountain side, had fallen through the centuries, and still lay where they had fallen.

Lakes where water-lilies float, where the tall reeds grow sparingly—lakes, the shores of which are bog and moorland—lakes that for number are well-nigh countless, that are desolate, and solitary beyond all power of description; rivers that wind not between wooded banks, or in deep beds of their own digging, but that crawl on in the summer over stone and granite, and that in winter spread wide as they like over moorland and bog, carrying

with them detached fragments of rock, which seem in the arms of the mighty flood to be borne lightly as feathers, away and away! A country without wood, without a house; a country where it seemed out of place, out of keeping, to meet a living being. This was what Agnes Drewitt saw as the post-horses laboured up the hills, or were lashed into a weary canter down them; this was the strange land which she was entering as a pilgrim and a stranger, wherein she was going to try to make her home.

It is all very well to travel through these Irish Highlands. The kingdom of Connemara is a grand kingdom, and the guide-books do not exaggerate when they call its scenery solemn and sublime; but it is one thing to visit a country and another to reside in it. The young Englishwoman looked out with dread and dismay on those overshadowing mountains, on those endless lakes that looked stern and desolate even with the summer's sun shining down upon them.

The wilderness Elijah fled through could not have been more lonely than Connemara; the cave at the mouth whereof he stood while the strong wind passed by, and the earthquake shook the hills, and the fire flashed before him, might have

been in just such a mountain as any of those that frowned upon her.

Ahab's wrath was powerless to touch the prophet there; the king's writ, she had heard, was not worth a halfpenny in the land through which she was travelling; and Mrs. Drewitt was just thinking of this saying, and wondering what such a savage country would be like when winter's frosts covered the ground, when winter's rains and snows swelled the torrents,—when suddenly, the road taking a sharp curve, the view changed—the bogs and the lakes and the mountains were left behind, and the sea burst upon her view.

How shall words ever give even the faintest idea of the exquisite beauty and peace of that summer's evening scene? How can pen and ink ever tell how green looked the grassy knolls that lay down by the shore; how fair were the islands in Duranmore Bay; how soft, and rich, and mellow the golden light that lay on wood and water, that steeped the trees and fell in great patches on the hill sides? With what a glad sound of welcome the "sweet chimes of the waves" sung their low song in the stranger's ear! "From Newfoundland and from Labrador," as has been happily said, they had

come "to mingle their voices in harmony," on that sea-beat shore; and Agnes Drewitt fancied she knew what they were telling her, and listened to their melody with an answering music swelling in her breast.

It was like heaven bursting upon her view; it was like light after darkness; it was like liberty after slavery; it was like everything her fancy had painted—her heart desired; it was beautiful—it was perfect; and Agnes Drewitt, young, impressionable, imaginative, basked in the loveliness and the sunshine, and was happy.

On one of the roads through Connemara there is a stone bearing the singular statement that from there it is twenty-one miles to Hell.

Where the Hell referred to may be—whether in this world or the next—I am unable to tell; but I am sure had Mrs. Drewitt been intrusted with the preparation of a table of distances she would have called Duranmore heaven, and given it as the ultimate destination of all tourists in Galway.

That sweet bay! those soft green hills! those grand headlands! seemed beautiful—thrice beautifulf, after the bleak desolation, the utter loneli-

ness of the wilderness through which she had passed; and she leaned forward in the carriage and strained her eyes over the landscape, while she said—

"How exquisite! How perfect!"

"That is Kincorth," said Mr. Drewitt, pointing to the northern side of the bay. "That is Kincorth," and he sighed as he spoke.

From sea, from hill, from wood, from mountain Agnes Drewitt withdrew her eager gaze, to turn towards her husband and inquire the meaning of that sigh. She was a clinging creature, reader, a woman who could not bear the sight of unhappiness, the sound of woe; she was a loving woman, who could not endure that her husband should have a care or a sorrow hidden from her.

Why did he sigh? Was he tired? Was he ill? Was he unhappy? And the little hand stole out to clasp his, and the sweet eyes turned towards him full of a ready sympathy.

"Unhappy!" he answered, carried away by one of those impulses he was as impotent as a child to control. "Unhappy! I have never been happy before. I never knew the meaning of the word

till I saw you. I never felt peace, perfect peace till I sat thus, with your hand clasped in mine. If I sighed it was because I felt at last happy and contented — as one takes a long, deep breath, when sitting down, after a weary journey, to rest. Do you understand me, darling? Life has been that journey, and you are the rest to me."

She did not understand him then, though she comprehended his meaning perfectly afterwards. She did not know that instead of bringing her home to comfort and bless her, he was bringing her home to comfort and bless him.

A slight, fragile thing she was, yet strong enough for this poor, weak, unstable creature to lean against and feel secure. From that day forth she was to be the crutch and he the cripple; she the rock and he the billow; she the nest and he the bird. Maxwell Drewitt had sketched the outline of her future life to perfection; but he had not been equally accurate in calling her choice mercenary, her marriage an interested one.

She had elected to cast her lot with Archibald Drewitt because she loved him; and loving him,

she would have gone through fire and water for his sake.

It is strange that such men are able to secure such wives; but it is not more strange than that the most unselfish of men draw so often viragos out of the matrimonial lottery.

We hear a great deal about the balance of power; is this the balance (matrimonially) of good and evil?

After his little lament about having found life's paths rough and dreary, Mr. Drewitt became both talkative and cheerful, and discoursed concerning the improvements he purposed effecting, concerning the alterations he intended making.

"Next year," he said, "I will rebuild the porter's lodge; and you shall draw me a pretty design for one."

In her heart Agnes thought that a new lodge ought to be erected at once; but she had sense enough not to say so, and merely remarked that the creepers and climbers which covered the damp walls and the broken roof were extremely picturesque.

Irish picturesqueness, however, could not make up to this stranger from a wealthier land for the

absence of all comfort, for the ruined walls, for the unmown grass, for the unrolled gravel, for the unswept walks.

The place, as Maxwell Drewitt in his pride thought he could keep it, would have suited Mrs. Drewitt a vast deal better than Kincorth, as it was.

Within the gates, under the arching trees, the old feeling of loneliness and desolation came upon her once more, and she shivered she scarcely knew why; and Mr. Drewitt wrapped her shawl more closely round her, while he whispered tenderly—

"Welcome home, my darling; welcome home."

They were on the very threshold of home now; but no one came forth to greet her. The hall door stood wide, but no servant was there—no relation, no living thing to meet the woman who, with that lonely feeling growing stronger every moment, walked into the house which she never left for any other habitation until she passed from under its roof-tree in middle age, with children beside her, with youth behind her, wearing widow's weeds for the husband of her choice, old before her time, with wrinkles across her forehead, with silver threads sprinkled through her rich dark hair.

When I come to tell you of how she left Kincorth, I would ask you to remember how she entered it—how she stood in the hall while the driver brought in the luggage and her husband fee'd him handsomely with almost the last money in his purse, how she followed Mr. Drewitt as he flung open the door of room after room to find each in succession empty, how she sat down finally in a little breakfast parlour and watched her husband first pull the bell till he broke it, and then go to the kitchens personally, to summon assistance.

In the distance she heard him rating and raging and cursing and swearing as she had never heard any one rate and rage and curse and swear before; and then the tempest lulled as suddenly as it had arisen, and Mr. Drewitt returned, followed by Nannie, who, curtseying reverentially to her new mistress, at once broke the ice with,

"Its welcome home ye are, ma'am, and shure an' we did not expec' ye for a couple of hours yit Mr. Maxwell said——"

"Show your mistress her room, Nannie," interrupted Mr. Drewitt, "and I'll see to the trunks being taken up. And Agnes, my darling," he

murmured, while Nannie, who was "up to the manœuvres of new-married folks," discreetly left the room, "if the house seems cold to you just at first, don't be vexed; they did not mean it, they did not know."

She lifted her sweet face to his, but she did not raise her eyes, for they were full of tears, and she did not want him to see that they were so. It was all mightily unlike the coming home she had so foolishly pictured to herself. No friendly hands stretched out towards her! no warm Irish words of welcome! But she would not let that discourage her: she would be brave, she would be strong, and do her duty.

She made this vow to herself with her husband's kiss warm on her lips. And she was strong, she did do her duty, and she had her reward.

"An' shure, ma'am, an' it's myself is heartily glad to see a mistress comin' home till the ould place," remarked Nannie, as she assisted Mrs. Drewitt to change her dress and unpack her boxes, and put some portion of their contents in order. "The lonely dissolate place this has been, the Lord knows, wantin' a lady to keep things straight and genteel. An' ye have come all the way from

London, I hear; and it's a terrible big place, they tells me. I hope ye won't be feelin' lonesome here, ma'am; for though it is a fine country—God bless it!—ye'll know it strange and solitary like at first."

At that Agnes Drewitt gave way, and she stooped her head for a minute while her tears fell fast as rain. Then she recovered herself and said—

"It is strange and solitary; you are right. You have put what I was feeling into words for me; but it is a fine country, and I will love it for my husband's sake, and I will love its people too, if they will let me."

"They would be mighty queer people if they did not love ye back, my lady," answered Nannie, in all sincerity; "so don't fret, ma'am, but just give them the pleasant word and the bright smle and they'll come to like you so well they'll forget you're not Irish."

Having administered which piece of comfort Nannie proceeded with her folding and straightening, and Mrs. Drewitt bathed the traces of tears from her cheeks preparatory to returning to the room where she had left her husband.

Mr. Drewitt was not there, however, when she

descended; but she met in his stead a young man who, with his hat on his head, and his hands buried deep in his pockets, was whistling to himself that loveliest of all the Irish airs—Cushla ma cree.

At sight of Mrs. Drewitt he pulled his hands out of his pockets, took his hat off his head, and introduced himself to her as Maxwell Drewitt. "And these are my sisters," he added, as three girls came trooping into the room.

"And consequently my nieces," finished Mrs. Drewitt, kissing them all round; an attention the young ladies seemed to regard as altogether superfluous and ill-timed.

"Does she know who we are really?" thought Maxwell Drewitt, as he saw Mrs. Drewitt's glance resting first on his sisters' shabby dresses, and then reverting to her own rich attire. "Does she know I ought to be master here—that I am the eldest son of the eldest son? or can she fancy we are pauper dependents on the bounty of her husband? I will take care she does not long remain in a state of blissful ignorance about that matter."

And he did take care; before three days he had

found opportunity to tell her the whole story; before three days he had opened the skeleton-closet at Kincorth, and anatomized its contents for her benefit.

"It is very hard for them, and it is very hard for me," argued poor Mrs. Drewitt; "but I will try to do my duty by them—and by everybody about the place. I will—I will—I will."

CHAPTER V.

PEACEMAKING.

DOING one's duty (a charming phrase in the abstract, doubtless) is usually much less agreeable in practice than in theory, seeing that it generally involves annoying oneself, and displeasing other people.

No credit attaches to it, because after all we have only done what we ought to have done; duty goes to bed weary and rises early; duty darns stockings and turns its dresses; duty does needlework, and pricks its fingers in the process; duty tends the sick and humours the fretful; duty gives to the poor, and goes about clad in the garments of humility; and for many and many a long day—perhaps until, there being no more duties to be

performed in this world, it betakes itself to the next—duty has the felicity of receiving all the kicks of which society is so liberal, while halfpence and silver and gold are showered upon those who do not go in for duty at all, but simply for pleasure.

There is nothing so hard to discharge, satisfactorily, as our duty; there is nothing for which we get so little thanks. It is like work looked down upon as a vulgar virtue: and yet when the small sums that go to make up life's great account come to be cast out, duty and work may be found to have borne good interest; though the one has oftentimes seemed to our eyes but as the toil of the ant, and the other but useless labour, but misspent energy.

Shall we say for all this, however, that the weakest among us is right to drift with the stream—to make no effort to stem its torrent? Would it have been better for Mrs. Drewitt to have never attempted to mend the ways of that wretched Irish household?

She never achieved a great deal, but she did something. After all it is not given to many women to accomplish much, and she tried her

best; and, as I have said before, in the long run she had her reward.

During the first few weeks of her residence at Kincorth the establishment was in a state of anarchy, for was not the election coming on, and did not an election always upset everything?

Gentlemen from Dublin — gentlemen from England—gentlemen from the remotest parts of the country came to Kincorth the moment Mr. Drewitt's return was announced, and took up their quarters there.

It was breakfast all the morning — it was luncheon all the day — it was dinner all the night—it was noise and confusion and excitement from one sunrise to another.

Canvassing was about the last work Mrs. Drewitt was fitted for, but out canvassing she had to go, with the Honourable Mrs. Munks and the Countess of Popingham.

There was not a description of bribery she did not see practised.

"I am hungry," Lady Popingham would say, with her arch Irish face lighted up by a very intelligible smile; and she would go into a baker's shop in Duranmore and ask for a bun.

"You're for Pryor?" she would remark — her mouth full of new bread, and her small fingers fiddling with half her purchase — "You're for Pryor."

"Well, I am not quite determined, my lady. They were in here the other day, and were bidding uncommon high; but your ladyship understands that I never did sell my vote, and I never will."

"That is honest and independent, is it not, Mrs. Drewitt?" observed the Countess. "I suppose you will not consider it bribery though to ask you to a ball, Mr. Rorke? There is to be one over at Kincorth to-morrow night, and Mrs. Drewitt will be very glad to see you there."

And with that Lady Popingham left her unfinished bun on the counter, and the baker said he would come and bring "the wife."

"And we may count on you, Mr. Rorke," remarked the Countess, from the doorstep; "you would rather give your vote to us than sell it to Mr. Pryor." At which observation the man laughed and the lady laughed, and the bread was swept into the till, and the Conservatives could count one more on their side.

It is not in flesh and blood to be near a con-

tested election and not to become interested in it; and before long Mrs. Drewitt found herself doing what she could to secure voters and to please their wives. She danced with the men—she danced with that identical baker—and had for her *vis-à-vis* Lady Marsden and a Duranmore butcher. She invited a hundred frieze-coated men into the drawing-room and sang for them till she was hoarse. She ordered some thousands of yards of blue ribbon, and paid for it herself; and she and Lady Popingham and Mrs. Munks made it up into rosettes for future use.

Mrs. Drewitt had expected her nieces to assist her in the work; but Susan, for self and fellows, flatly declined to do anything of the kind.

"If we wear anything we shall wear red," she said. "Our brother is for Mr. Pryor, and we are for Mr. Pryor too."

At this Mrs. Drewitt drew back astounded.

"Do you mean," she said, "that Maxwell and Mr. Drewitt are on different sides?"

"Our mother was a Roman Catholic," explained Miss Drewitt; "and it is only right that Maxwell should remember that, and vote accordingly."

"If it were not for landlord terrorism," put in

Wilhelmina—she was usually called Willy—"no one who was not for the Catholics would ever be returned in Ireland."

"The very servants about the house are all for Pryor," added Susan, "only they would be discharged if they were to say so."

"And Maxwell was telling us that if you had been wise you would not have taken so active a part in the canvassing, because it will set the poor people against you," capped Wilhelmina.

"But I only did it to please your uncle, and he is liked by every one."

"Perhaps so," answered Miss Drewitt, with a sneer; "but at any rate *he* is not English."

"And that makes a difference, you think?"

"That makes all the difference, I know."

And Miss Susan Drewitt drew up her tall figure and looked down upon her aunt, who was at least half a head shorter, as she made this pleasant remark.

"It's just beyond me, childer," said Nannie to them one day, "till understan' what delight ye can find in making that craythur's life a burden till her; she has not a bit the same look in her face she had when she came here first."

"She had no business to come here at all, answered Miss Drewitt. "Ireland for the Irish, as Maxwell says: we want no strangers here."

"But shure and it's most of all because she is a stranger that ye ought to be good till her, so that she might not always be fretting for the country and the friends she has left behind her. Why can't ye make it up, young ladies, and live agreeable? See, now, how Miss Kathleen has taken to her."

"You are an old hypocrite, Nannie," returned Miss Drewitt. "You and Miss Kathleen both like Mrs. Drewitt for the sake of what she gives you."

"Now may I niver, Miss Susan! may I niver die in my bed if the mistress—God grant her a long life!—ever give me more than 'Thank ye, Nannie,' or 'If ye plaze.' Miss Kathleen has I know got many a thing from her; but I mind hearing you, Miss Susan, tell your aunt, when she wanted you to get that illigant blue silk let down and wear it yourself, that your brother would not allow you to wear any person's cast-off gowns, ye did; and ye knew she had never had that same silk on her back; and she went away to her own room and cried so pitiful! I'd have gone in and told her

never to heed what you said, for that nobody did, only I was afraid she might be angry."

"Well, I tell you what, Nannie," said Willy, at this juncture; "if you get her to give me that new riding-habit she brought over with her, I'll be friends, for I am rather sick of war."

"If you take it you are quits with me," remarked her sister.

"There is no chance of your giving me a riding-habit, Sue," retorted the other, "and I do want one so badly; Loo Munks is so proud of hers from Dublin, and it is nothing like such a beauty as Mrs. Drewitt's. Ask her, Nannie, like a good old soul, which you're not, and see if she will give it to me."

"Give it to you! she would cut the hair off her head and give it away if she thought it could pleasure you; but I won't ask, faith I won't, for she has only the one, and it's meself hopes to see her riding with the masther over to Tully Kill whenever the hunting begins again."

"Then I will ask her," said Wilhelmina; and she was rushing into the drawing-room to prefer her request, when the sound of angry voices and loud speaking frightened her back.

It was Mr. Drewitt and Maxwell having it out concerning the election — concerning Maxwell's canvass of Colonel Vervensoe's tenantry.

"He was over here himself this morning," said Mr. Drewitt.

"It was not likely he would come over as anybody else," remarked Maxwell.

"Don't mock me, sir," shouted out the owner of Kincorth. "Keep your insolence for other people, for d—n me if I'll stand it. And I won't stand your interference, either. You shall not tamper with our voters. Vote for Pryor yourself if you like, and be hanged to you; but don't try to get up a party against me, I advise you."

"I was not aware you were going to stand," observed Maxwell, coolly.

"You know I am for Sache, at any rate," retorted Mr. Drewitt, "and you know you turned round to Pryor without ever telling me your intention, without ever saying a word to put me on my guard. And now listen to this: Colonel Vervensoe swears that if ever he finds you about his house again, he will horsewhip you; and he is a man to keep his promise."

"He had better not try to horsewhip me," said

Maxwell, slowly, "not if he values his life; for so sure as he attempts it, I'll break every bone in his body."

"He is a stronger man than you."

"Is he?"

"And he declares he will not have his tenantry tampered with, or endure any man dangling after his wife."

"He must speak to Lady Emmeline about that. If she likes me to canvass with her, I shall certainly do it, and I shall do my best to get Geoffry Pryor returned, if the devil himself tried to stop me."

"You shall not."

"I shall;" and Maxwell turned to leave the room, but Mr. Drewitt prevented him.

"Look here, Maxwell," he said, "it is time you and I came to an understanding."

"Oh! Archibald," implored Mrs. Drewitt, "do not say any more while you are angry—do not speak while you are irritated. If Maxwell thinks Mr. Pryor ought to get in, why should he not canvass for him? I am certain you are wrong in this matter, love; I am, indeed."

"You know nothing about it, Agnes; you are

talking on subjects you do not understand," said her husband; while Maxwell, with a grave bow, thanked her for her interference, but remarked he and his uncle had argued out many a point before, and settled many a dispute, without the help of a third party.

Which speech was intended to cut two ways—to make Mr. Drewitt more angry than he was, and to send Mrs. Drewitt out of the room.

It did neither. Mrs. Drewitt would not go, because she felt her presence was some restraint upon both, and Mr. Drewitt calmed down in a moment, and said, "I see what you are driving at, Maxwell, but you may as well save yourself the trouble, for I will not turn you out of the house."

"There are more ways of killing a dog than hanging him," answered Maxwell, "and it is possible to make a place so confoundedly uncomfortable for a man that he may leave it of his own accord. We need not quarrel any more, sir," he went on, his face hardening and setting as he spoke, "for I shall leave Kincorth without being shown to the door."

"You shall not leave Kincorth," said Mr. Drewitt, forgetting his anger in the rush of memo-

ries that came swelling up in his heart. "Vote for whom you like, I'll say nothing more to you about it. I may have been wrong. Don't go away like this. You shall not go, Maxwell;" and as he spoke, he laid a detaining hand on his nephew's arm.

Maxwell shook it off scornfully.

"It is not in the power of any man to make another stay in hell," he answered; "and for many a long day Kincorth has been like hell to me. You have my father's property, but you shan't have my father's son as well;" and with that Maxwell walked past his uncle, and out of the apartment.

"Agnes, stop him, talk to him, don't let him go," said Mr. Drewitt; and only too glad of the order, his wife ran up to her nephew's room, at the door of which she knocked gently.

"Who is there?" asked Maxwell.

"It is I," she answered; "let me in, Maxwell—let me speak to you. I have something particular to say; I have, indeed."

"Is my uncle with you?" he inquired.

"No, I am here alone; there is no one with me; let me in, Maxwell, do——"

He unlocked the door, and held it open for her to pass in; then he bolted and locked it, putting the key in his pocket; after which he placed the only chair the apartment boasted for her to sit on, and shutting a box he had just commenced packing, he sat down himself, and waited patiently for her to commence.

All round the room Mrs. Drewitt's glance wandered. She had often been in it before, and done her best to make it more comfortable for its occupant; but now it seemed to her to look more bare and wretched than ever, and she wondered whether she had done right in letting Maxwell keep his den, instead of insisting on his occupying some of the spare chambers on the first floor.

Those spare chambers had been full of guests almost ever since her own arrival, so that she need scarcely have blamed herself in the matter; but Mrs. Drewitt was one of those women who always magnify their own shortcomings, and she could have burst out crying to think Maxwell was going, and she should never have a chance of doing better for him than that.

He half guessed what she was thinking about, and said:

"You have done as much for it as could be done, but it is not a very first-rate bedchamber. In the winter time the rain comes in there, and there, and there, and the wind blows the candle out, and it is damp, and cold, and wretched. Till you came—well, you know what it was when you came, and I see what it is now. Don't think I blame my uncle for things like this, though," he added hastily, "or that I am so effeminate as to care for them. I only regret the years I have wasted here. I only reproach my uncle for having let me live here in idleness when he knew the day must come that I would have to turn out from even this shelter and earn my living as I could."

"But you will not go," she pleaded; "your uncle told me to ask you to stay. We will do what we can for you, only remain—only—only—remain."

And she stretched out her hands imploringly towards Maxwell, who sat with his hands clasped tightly together and his head bent down, for a moment silent after she had ceased speaking. Then he answered:

"Because you ask me, I would remain if I could; but I cannot. Mr. Drewitt thinks that

he and I might make up this quarrel; and so, perhaps, we might. But if we healed this sore, it would only break out in a fresh place to-morrow. I am too old now for there to be peace between us," he went on fiercely. "He ought either never to have undertaken to do anything for us, or he ought to have done it. If he had given me even a chance of earning my living, I would have worked and slaved to make myself and my sisters independent. It could not have been a great expense had he put me through college; but he never could afford to send me to Trinity—could not afford with Kincorth, and Analore, and twenty other nice little properties beside! When he came into this estate he had, if you believe me, Mrs. Drewitt, eight thousand a year clear—I think there was a mortgage on the place, which brought the rent-roll down to eight thousand—but a man may live on eight thousand a year," finished Maxwell Drewitt, bitterly. "It is a long way off starvation that."

"If he has been imprudent," remarked Mrs. Drewitt, "he is sorry for that imprudence; if he has never done anything for you, it is not too late for him to mend his error now. I am not saying,

Maxwell, remember, that he has acted rightly—indeed, I am afraid he has been very wrong; but he has done wrong without intending it, and if you stay, he can try to make reparation."

"He has not the means now," answered Maxwell; "if he had the will he has not the power. He is mortgaged up to his ears. There is nothing free, excepting Kincorth, and Kincorth will have to be pawned to provide funds to pay for the expenses of this election and a few other extravagances in which he has lately been indulging. I have waited long enough—I have waited and I have hesitated; but now I will take my pack on my back and go to seek my fortune."

"But you will not go at once," she said. "You will stay and see—you will not part in anger when you do leave. Your uncle is dreadfully grieved, and, Maxwell, you were insolent! You ought not to have tried his patience as you did."

"A beggar has only one weapon, and it is hard if he may not use that," replied the young man. "No," he continued, "I must either go now or never——"

"Let it be never, then," she interrupted; but Maxwell shook his head.

"Mrs. Drewitt," he said, "I put it to your own sense. Can I stay here? Would it be well for me to do so? Would it be wise—would it be manly? Would you like to see any one you cared for, occupying the dependent position I fill? Would you not bid him rather go out and work—earn his bread, rather than have it given to him?"

"Perhaps so," she assented; "but I would have no one go in anger. Your uncle was saying something about thinking you might like a commission, Maxwell. Should you like it? My father might be able to get you one; or if not, I am positive my brother-in-law could obtain some government appointment for you, in England or the colonies. Should you care for that?"

"No, thank you, Mrs. Drewitt," answered Maxwell; "an officer without private means is only a pauper in uniform; and besides, to be frank," he went on, "I would rather take no favour from your family."

"You dislike me so much, I suppose," she said, a little flush coming up into her face. She had never been disliked before, and it hurt her to think she could only make enemies, let her try her best to gain friends. "You dislike me so much."

"Not personally," he replied. "I only dislike you as being Mr. Drewitt's wife."

"But what difference can being his wife make?" she asked.

"I cannot tell you that now," he said, "but perhaps I may some day. What I can tell you at this moment," he proceeded, suddenly returning to the question at issue, "is, that I wish to leave Kincorth at once, on account of the election. My uncle wants me to stop for a similar reason. He thinks it will damage his canvassing if——"

"If people imagine you and he have quarrelled," finished Mrs. Drewitt, as he paused and hesitated. "Then, Maxwell, was he right? Were you trying to provoke him to tell you to leave the house?"

There was a moment's hesitation, but then Maxwell Drewitt said boldly—

"You may as well know me for what I am at once. I was wanting him to turn me out. As he is too wise to do that, I am going to turn myself out. You look shocked. You begin to see that there may be things in heaven and earth undreamed of in your hitherto very limited philosophy; but in the future, when you are thinking what a sinner I

am, remember that I have had no opportunity of becoming a saint. Life has not been a bed of roses to me. The teachings I have listened to have not always been such as the regenerate hear in church. As time goes by you will come to understand what kind of a home Kincorth has been to us, and then judge us if you like. You will do what you can for the girls, I know, till I am able to take them from you."

"Don't go, Maxwell," entreated Mrs. Drewitt, and there was a sick, dead feeling about her heart as she spoke. "Don't go; let us try all together to make a better use of your life; let us live in peace and unity, as such near relations should."

"Did Esau live at peace with Jacob?" asked Maxwell, who was weary of the discussion. "Was Ishmael suffered to remain after the new heir was born? Do you suppose Lazarus, living on the crumbs that fell from Dives' table, had a friendly feeling towards the men who fared sumptuously every day? If Solomon had not slain Adonijah, would Adonijah ever have ceased troubling his brother? Can you remember an instance where the disinherited loved the man who inherited? Is it not

better for us to live apart in peace, than under the same roof at war?"

"I wish I were a better peacemaker," she said.

"If an angel came down from heaven, unless indeed he were the angel of death," said Maxwell, with an emphasis on the latter part of his sentence which was not quite intelligible to his auditor, "he could not keep me in Kincorth now. It will not take me long to pack my clothes, I have not so many of them, and then I mean to go. Tell my uncle I thank him for wanting me to stay all the same, but I would rather travel my own road, and that leads me out of Kincorth."

Having finished which explicit speech, Mr. Maxwell Drewitt unlocked the door, and held it open for his aunt to pass out, as he had held it open for her to pass in.

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE HUSTINGS.

Mr. Drewitt and his nephew did not part quite as friends, and yet to the eye of the world they did not part as enemies. Finding his wife's intervention useless, the owner of Kincorth, though grievously wounded and worsted, let matters take their course. Had the quarrel originated in anything else than the election, Mr. Drewitt would have felt its consequences more bitterly than was the case. He could not have let his dead brother's only son leave Kincorth in such a fashion had a question of politics not been raised between them; but as it was so it was. Maxwell had done what his father would not have done—helped a man's wife to tamper with his tenantry; and if he liked to go, and if nothing could hinder

his going, why, he must do so, and take the consequences.

"He will be glad enough to come back when the election is over," thought Mr. Drewitt; but in this idea he was wrong. Maxwell had made up his mind by very slow degrees to moving; but once made up it would have been impossible to induce him to return.

He and his uncle had often had quarrels before, and Maxwell had frequently hinted that if pushed too far he might leave Kincorth altogether.

On one of these occasions Mr. Drewitt had told him he might go to the devil if he chose, and Maxwell had retorted that his uncle had taken precious good care he should not travel post at any rate.

Between such near relations little amenities of this kind meant nothing, or next to nothing; but now the case was different. With no great provocation, the young man had elected to leave Kincorth, and could not be persuaded to remain in it.

If he repented of his choice at any future period, Kincorth was free to him still. Meantime, as he sowed he must reap, and Kincorth could do without him.

Supposing Archibald Drewitt ever reasoned out the question, it is very likely he did it in somewhat the preceding fashion; but truth was, he had little time for thinking. He was so taken up with the election—he had such hosts of people to see—he was so eternally occupied, that he had no leisure to observe things which did not, however, escape his wife's observation.

She saw her husband was not quite so popular as formerly. She perceived that the lower orders were looking coldly on her; she heard indirectly that the Liberals were making way; she understood that Maxwell's departure was being made a party question; she learnt that many laid the blame of the fracas on her; when she passed through the tents that were erected on the lawn, where the populace got drunk *au discrétion* at her husband's expense, she heard muttered remarks on the subject of English pride, and outlandish airs, and "interlopers."

The election had seemed good fun at first; if it had done nothing else, it had served to divert her attention from household grievances, from domestic shortcomings; but now, when she laid her aching head on her pillow, she sighed for the

peace and the happiness of her father's house, and prayed for the contest to be well over.

Then, as in the future, Mrs. Drewitt had to fight out her fight alone. From the first hour in which she set foot in her husband's house she kept her trials to herself; she made up her mind not to worry him about trifles, and before long she came to the conclusion it would be quite as well not to worry him about great things either.

Unstable as water! Who would entrust a pearl of great price to the mercies of the stream, to the keeping of a river?—and yet this was precisely what this poor soul had done all unwittingly. Her love was her pearl; her happiness was her sole treasure; and she had cast both at the feet of a man who, never having done well for himself, was never likely to do well for her.

Unstable as water! the streamlet ran by; unstable as water! the waves came and went, and ebbed and flowed, and she keeping up a brave face through the day, cried herself to sleep at night.

She never saw her husband except in the middle of a crowd of voters or else at the end of a long dinner-table. The house was crammed with visitors. Sorely against her will she had even to

move Kathleen to Maxwell's old room, and give the girl's bedchamber to a bachelor guest.

"It is always like this in the hunting season, aunty; don't mind about me," said Kathleen. "I have had to sleep many and many a night on the floor, because they sat up so late it was no use trying to get a sofa; on the floor with nothing but a blanket under me, and hard work to get that. Maxwell did not like being turned out constantly, so he came up here at last. When will he be back, aunty darling?"

"After the election, I hope, Kathie," answered Mrs. Drewitt, as she kissed the girl and bade her good-night. "After the election."

"I wish it was over," sighed Kathleen.

She did not wish it over more than her aunt, who firmly believed that the contest never would have an end, for the minutes seemed to be like days, and the days like years.

But at last the nomination day came round, and both parties girt up their loins and prepared for war.

It was a fine morning, "God bliss it," as the country people remarked one to another: no better weather could have been desired for the

nomination of candidates. That was going to be a great day for Connemara, at least for that portion of it in which we are at present more particularly interested. The right of the Earl of Popingham to return his nominee was going to be fiercely disputed; there was going to be, at last, a thoroughly well-contested election. Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! and caps and hats went flying up in the air, and "Three cheers for Sache," and "None o' that, but three times three with a will, boys, for Pryor," re-echoed through the usually quiet streets of Duranmore.

Hurrah! and huzza! and hooroo! Who would not yell and cheer and shout till he was black in the face?—for had every public-house not been open to the populace for weeks past? and was not every "free and independent" drunk? and had not each man amongst them who was wavering in the least pocketed his five, or ten, or twenty pounds? and was not Irish enthusiasm and Irish excitement worked up by whiskey and party feeling to fever-point on that glorious August morning when Geoffry Pryor was to be seconded by Maxwell Drewitt?

The town was fuller than a fair; the electors

were drunker than fiddlers; the canvassers were busier than ever; the candidates were in an agony of suspense; the windows opposite the hustings were crowded with ladies; the inn-yards were a sight to behold, crammed full of carriages. There were opposition bands playing, and flags waving, and ribbons fluttering, and people jostling, and boys shouting, and women screaming, and children being crushed to pieces, and police plunging through the crowd. Two companies of horse occupied one side of the market-place, ready to charge the populace at a moment's notice; and, altogether, Duranmore was a great and cheering sight, for in the days of which I am now writing elections were no child's play. Lives were lost, men trampled under foot, ridden down by the soldiers, kicked, stoned, cudgelled. Heads were cracked, limbs broken. Donnybrook, at its worst, was a peaceable sort of scene in comparison to an Irish election at its best, where men of station and of standing sacrificed fortune, character, position, truth, honour, honesty, their fellow-creatures' happiness, and, in many cases, their fellow-creatures' lives, to return for their representative in Parliament

perhaps as great a vagabond as ever cheated the sheriff.

Duranmore and West Connemara was, for various reasons, considered by the landlord interest in that part of Ireland a stronghold of considerable importance; and the interest of the approaching contest consisted in the fact that it was to be a kind of fight for independence. Was the seat virtually to belong to the Earl of Popingham, or not? Were the Roman Catholics going to let the sworn enemy of their church return his nominee again?

The priests had been busy; the priests had their crow to pluck with the Earl, and were going to make the election expensive to him at any rate. Whilst the landlords threatened ejection from their holdings, the priests threatened exclusion from heaven. While the Earl of Popingham said, "Vote for Sache—or notice at November," the proprietors of snug little locations in the next world whispered, "Vote for Pryor—or everlasting damnation."

It was a nice fix for men to be placed in. Starvation in this world, or hell fire in the next—a lively prospect either way; so cheerful that we can scarcely wonder that in many cases the tenants

preferred facing the danger which was furthest off, and chose rather to fall into the hands of the devil than into those of their landlord.

It is of many and many a year ago I am talking, I pray you bear in mind. If the landed proprietors of those days were not unexceptionable, their successors have doubtless made all up to the generation of tenants that pay rents now; and as it is not very graceful to cut down into old sores, I will only add, there was not a place in the United Kingdom where party feeling ran so high, where bribes were so heavy, where such an amount of virulence and animosity was displayed, as it was in that out-of-the-way corner of the earth where two fit and proper candidates were about to contest the honour of representing the people in Parliament.

As a matter of course, there had always hitherto been some fight made, and equally perhaps of course the nominee had always heretofore won; but on this occasion the claims seemed more nearly equal than had ever been the case before, for it was well known that young Mr. Waller of Eversbeg had deserted his late father's principles and gone over to the enemy; and it was reported

that—instigated thereto and encouraged therein by Lady Emmeline Vervensoe and Mr. Maxwell Drewitt—the Vervensoe tenantry had turned restive on a papistical question, and were intending to vote according to the dictates of their unenlightened consciences for once.

Altogether, Duranmore was a great and glorious sight.

It was enough to make any one madly in love with our representative system, and with the way seats in Parliament are secured, to see the spectacle the town presented.

For a month the place had been drunk—not figuratively, but literally—for weeks men had not been men, but rather casks full of spirits: they drank till they were blind, and then slept till they could see. The whole town and all the inhabitants thereof smelt of whiskey; every free and independent was in a state of greater or lesser incapability; every barmaid was frightfully active; every servant went about like a walking ribbon-shop; every wife was on the look-out for money: if the husbands were drunk, that was no reason why business should be neglected.

They would see to the votes when the time

came; meanwhile they would take care of the notes.

Towards the last there was no attempt to do the thing under the rose; gentlemen and ladies went about buying votes—not begging them—not even going through the ceremony of appearing to believe open bribery could be, as the Countess of Popingham said, "hurtful to their sensitive feelings."

Rents were forgiven; fines remitted; leases promised; farms let on advantageous terms; money was cheerfully paid for getting voters out of the way; personation fees ran high—in short, neither side left a stone unturned, or a trick untried, likely to prove beneficial to what they were severally pleased to call the "good cause."

To be strictly impartial, there was not a toss up between them.

"If you had shaken the Tories and Whigs up in a bag together," remarked Ryan afterwards, "I do not know which would have come out first."

There were no clean hands among either party; no man was so free of blame that he could have thrown stones at his opponent. The game had been a tremendously expensive one; and "who-

ever wins, the people get the stakes," said Mr. Timothy Ryan regretfully.

What a gay sight the town presented! The windows of every house commanding a view of the hustings were full of women—young, well-born, beautiful—who exhibited red or blue ribbons, according to the side they affected.

The fair Sacheites, headed by the Countess of Popingham, Mrs. Munks, Lady Marsden, Mrs. Hickman, Mrs. Drewitt, and a bevy of other county notables took possession of the assembly room, which chanced to be Lord Marsden's property; whilst conspicuous among the ladies in the Liberal interest, who occupied the Court-house, appeared in white dress and red ribbons the still beautiful though somewhat *passée* Lady Emmeline Vervensoe, who having openly deserted her husband's colours, had gone about canvassing, in company with Mr. Waller and Maxwell Drewitt, to the intense mortification of her husband and the extreme scandal and disgust of the Popingham faction.

Lady Emmeline had come of great people; she was an heiress in her own right, she had condescended to marry a commoner; further, she was

a poetess and had written some very charming lines to the cuckoo, and a few verses of a highly laudatory character concerning Duranmore Bay—for all these reasons Lady Emmeline did as she pleased, and suffering no one to say her nay, sat on the opposition benches, smiling in conscious loveliness, the observed of all observers.

The town was like a garden; every flower-bed for miles round having been rifled of its treasures to deck the houses, horses, and hustings.

Triumphal arches of red and white dahlias, long festoons of evergreens relieved by flowers formed of blue calico and tied with floating ribbons, branches of oak, sycamore, and elm, yards of ivy, hearts, stars, mottoes formed of every imaginable flower hung fading in the sun.

Blue flags and red flags danced in the light breeze; the opposition bands played at one and the same time Garry Owen and God save the King; full-length caricatures of Sache and Pryor were exhibited on every available yard of wall; election ballads were chanted at the extremest pitch of the human voice; there were drums, there were horns, there were Jew's harps, there

were penny whistles, there was every imaginable instrument, there was every imaginable noise.

Sache's supporters drove into town, their servants dressed in blue and silver liveries, and their carriages decorated with blue hammer-cloths, edged with silver lace. Pryor's friends—for the most part young bachelors who affected different opinions from those their fathers had held—came galloping into the market square with their saddles and bridles ornamented in red and gold.

Such splendour! such misery! such evidences of wealth! such signs of poverty! such sleek, well-groomed, gaily-caparisoned horses! such under-fed, dirty, half-clothed men and women!

Ah! reader, how can I ever hope to show you the violent contrasts that were presented to view within so small a space—contrasts that would have been shocking, had they not been ludicrous also?

The candidates were so spruce, the constituents were so shabby; the hats of the first were faultless, the head-gear of the latter wretched: the blue or red colours of the gentry showed to advantage over glossy broadcloth, over snowy waistcoats; the rosettes of the electors were pinned on tattered garments, that had been patched and

patched till they were like unto the coat of many colours that brought Joseph so much ill-will.

But though poor, they were merry; they were, as the Earl of Popingham said, perpetrating an execrable pun, "full of spirits;" and fuller of whiskey than they had ever been of food, laughing, jeering, jesting, yelling, shouting, they shoved and pushed and fought their way up towards the hustings.

Mr. Sache was not popular among the lower orders, and he knew it. He was no hero—morally and physically he was a coward; and though he had drunk brandy enough to have, as Lord Marsden contemptuously told him, brought colour into the cheeks of a corpse, yet when he appeared on the hustings he looked the very embodiment of terror and despair.

Gazing down upon the sea of upturned faces, listening to the jeers and menaces of the crowd, in mortal dread of dead cats, rotten cabbages, and still more rotten eggs, he thought a seat in Parliament hardly worth passing through such an ordeal to gain.

"What the deuce brought me here?" he said to Mr. Munks, and his lips were white and his body all of a tremble while he spoke.

"What the deuce brought you here, is it?" asked Mr. Munks; "why, we did, and damned idiots we have been, I consider, for our pains. But now you are here, there is no help for the matter; and if you show the white feather, by —— I'll shoot you dead!"

And then Mr. Munks faced round on young Waller of Eversbeg, who was mocking Mr. Sache, and laughing at the creditable figure cut by the Conservative candidate; turned round, and asked him how *he* would like to have his account settled, "in cold steel or hot lead?"

Whereupon Mr. Waller demanded if Mr. Munks wanted to make his will. "Because," he went on, "Ryan can draw you out a draft, and Mr. Pryor would give an opinion on it, and I dare say make no charge under the circumstances."

"Get to business — get to business, Munks," whispered Mr. Drewitt, impatiently, "for heaven's sake let us have it over;" and thus exhorted, Mr. Munks, whenever the cheering and groaning consequent upon the appearance of the candidates had in some measure subsided, commenced, "Gentlemen——"

"Three groans, my boys, and don't listen to

him. Hiss ——" and there came a storm of yells and hisses and execrations, accompanied by a smart shower of missiles, most of which fortunately fell short of the target.

"Gentlemen," again essayed Mr. Munks, who, whatever other virtues he lacked, certainly was game to the backbone. "Gentlemen——"

"Who raised the rints last half——?"

"Who broke the leases?"

"Who put Dick Benton to the dure?"

"Who took the roof off the Widdy Martin, and her down in the favar?"

"Och! ye murthering villain."

"Och! ye blackguard thafe."

"Put a praty in yer ugly mouth; here's one for ye."

"Gentlemen——"

"Hould yer tongue."

"He couldn't do it. He'd slobber his chin."

"Gentlemen, I beg to——"

"Beg of somebody, then, that doesn't know ye."

"Och, can't ye let the man spake? Shure his wife never lets him have the chance at home."

"Go away and send up Betty!"

"In her ridin'-habit!"

"That she is goin' to be buried in!"

"Come, come, my lads, this won't do!" yelled out Ryan, in a stentorian voice, which was distinctly audible even above the din. "Fair play is a jewel. Never refuse to listen to anybody. Hear Mr. Munks—you don't know what he may be going to promise you."

"Talk's chape!" shouted out a refractory voter. "Fine words butther no parsnips!"

"Ye can't boult the dure wid a boiled carrot!"

"Be quiet, will you!" vociferated Ryan, "and attend to the gentleman's speech;" and thus exhorted the crowd permitted Mr. Munks to commence.

He said he hoped they would return Mr. Sache, that he was no stranger, but a resident in the neighbourhood, and known to every one of them.

"A d——d sight too well!" hiccupped a tipsy tailor; at which remark the hubbub began again with twenty times greater vigour than ever.

Hissing, yelling, hooting, cheering, cries of "Go on, Munks!" "Go in and win!" "Speak up, man!" "Make haste or you'll be late!" "Are you afraid of Betty? Lord, man, we won't let her touch you

here!" with peals of laughter and volleys of oaths, compelled Mr. Munks finally to give up in despair.

"It is of no use," he exclaimed; "they won't listen to us; there is a conspiracy; the crowd is packed."

On this Maxwell Drewitt came hurriedly forward. "If you won't hear Mr. Munks," he cried, "hear my uncle. We are on opposite sides, but I am sure he will tell you a great deal you would not willingly miss. Now three cheers for Archibald Drewitt, who never defrauded the poor man yet! Cheer like Irishmen, and not like a set of over-fed, beer-drinking Saxons. Cheer, you rascals, cheer!"

Thus exhorted, the rascals did cheer, till they were hoarse, for Archibald Drewitt, for Maxwell Drewitt, for Waller and for Pryor; but somehow Mr. Sache's seconder did not seem much elated by the applause. Pushing his nephew aside, he said, the moment a lull in the tempest permitted his words to be heard—

"I need no one to claim a hearing from me. I am not afraid of your refusing any request of mine. You will give a patient hearing to your old friend Archibald Drewitt— (tremendous cheering and cries of 'That we will!') We are old acquaint-

ances, and do not need to be introduced to one another by anybody. We have not always agreed about politics, it is true, but we have agreed to disagree. Some amongst you go with me, and others do not; but to one and all my advice is—Return Mr. Sache! [Uproar and yells of 'No, we won't!'] Yes, gentlemen, you will. He is as honest a man as you'll find. [Interruption, and a remark that 'Honest men must be scarce!'] Yes, my friends, I admit that they are scarce, and for that very reason you ought not to let Mr. Sache slip through your fingers. He will do you justice in Parliament! [Great confusion.] He knows your wants, and you know his principles. ['To be very bad!'] He is a gentleman who will never deceive you." ['No, faith, we know him too well to let him do that. He was cut out for a gentleman, but the devil ran away with the patthern!'] And then came another burst of yelling, hissing, and fighting.

"Now, now, my friends," said Mr. Drewitt, "I asked you for a peaceable hearing, and I thought you would have done that much for me. It is not so often I make a speech that you should interrupt me when I do. Just give me five minutes to tell you why you should return Mr.

Sache, and I will promise not to detain you longer. [A prolonged howl, and cries of 'We want to hear nothing about him.'] Very likely; but I want to tell you something about him. His political views are sound; if you do not approve of them, it is not because they are bad, but because you cannot see what is good for you. He is an Irishman, has an interest in the soil, loves the country of his birth, will speak up for your rights——"

"Arrah! hear that. The man can't say boo to a goose. Him spake up!" And ironical cheers and perfect shrieks of laughter drowned the remainder of Mr. Drewitt's sentence.

"Well, gentlemen," he resumed, when a partial lull enabled his words to be heard, "I suppose if I appeared before you a candidate for the honour of representing you in Parliament, instead of trying to second Mr. Munks's statement, that Mr. Sache is a fit and proper person to fill that office—in that case also, I suppose, you would refuse to hear a syllable I had to say?"

"No, we would not; we'd return you and send you up to London flying. Propose yourself, Archibald Drewitt, and we'll second you. Hurrah!"

He had them on the hip now, and pushed his advantage.

"Then it is to Mr. Sache himself and not to his political principles you object. They cannot but be to your liking, because you say you would have me for your member, and my views are identical with his. My friends, you are acting at this minute much like children who strike a hard table when they have knocked themselves. You think you will hurt us by returning Mr. Pryor, and in reality you will only hurt yourselves. Mr. Sache wishes to serve you; but as you do not happen to like him, you cheer and shout for a man who will not serve you at all. Mr. Pryor, a very estimable young gentleman no doubt, is not fitted to be your representative. What interest has he in the country? Though an Irishman, I believe, by descent, he is yet English by birth, education, and residence. He is a stranger, a lawyer, a mere boy."

"Fifty times betther man than Sache, the dirty spalpeen! We won't hear a word against Pryor. We'll gag the first that cheers for the hardhearted landlord." Which speech being accepted as a challenge, gave rise to a regular shindy, that diversified and enlivened the proceedings. Heads

were cracked, shillelaghs waved, lips cut, an arm or two broken: the police had finally to interfere to restore order, and then Mr. Waller came to the front, and was greeted with tumultuous acclamations from the one side and by hisses, groans, cabbage-stalks, bad eggs, and rotten fruit from the Sacheites.

"Gentlemen."

"Three cheers for Lady Emmeline! Three times three!"

And Lady Vervensoe, who had drawn public attention to herself by waving a crimson scarf out of the window, now rose and bowed right and left to the crowd in acknowledgment of their compliment.

With her white dress and red ribbons, with her chip hat and plume of red feathers, her grace and beauty, she created quite a furore; and during the excitement attendant on this demonstration Mr. Waller managed to move the election of his cousin, Mr. Pryor, as a fit and proper person to represent Duranmore and West Connemara in Parliament.

"It is my turn now," whispered Maxwell Drewitt to Ryan. And he came forward, and leaning over the rails, and jauntily holding in his left hand a bran new hat, began—

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESULT OF THE POLL.

"ELECTORS of Duranmore and West Connemara—for I am not going to call you, for a purpose, gentlemen, which you are not, nor friends, because I see a good many faces below there which belong to my enemies—but Electors of Duranmore and West Connemara. I want you to listen to what I have got to tell you about the way elections have been previously managed in this part of the country, and of how we intend that they shall be managed in future——"

Cheers from the Reds, hisses from the Blues.

"For shame, Maxwell Drewitt!" cried one.

"Siding against your uncle."

"Is it to the likes of you we're going to listen, do you think?"

"Go home, boy! out o' that."

"Home is it?" shouted another; "has he not been turned out of the only one he ever knew?" And at the words Archibald Drewitt turned sick.

"Isn't it himself ought to be at the ould place now instead of them that owns it?"

"No, it is not," answered Maxwell Drewitt, whose face was scarlet, but not with pain. "It is not; Archibald Drewitt came into Kincorth fairly. Long may he keep it!"

"Ye wish it, don't ye, Max?" cried some one among the crowd. And then there came shrieks of laughter and cheers and hisses.

"Make it up with him, man; it's not too late yet."

"Why didn't ye quarrel till he married?"

"Why could ye not have let somebody else put in the spake for Pryor?"

"Because I wanted to tell you what nobody else will tell you: because my family affairs have nothing to do with anybody in Duranmore: because I see no reason why I should wear my uncle's political opinions, if they do not chance to fit me, any more than his clothes. Conservatism is stationary. Liberalism is progressive. Toryism may suit those

who have had their way made for them, but those who have to make their way for themselves see that the Whigs have the best of the argument.

"I am now in the same boat with the poorest man amongst you. He wants to rise, so do I; he wants to make money, so do I; he does not want to be ground under the carriage wheels of the upper ten thousand, neither do I. We are all of one mind in this matter; we want butter to our bread, and ham and eggs to our breakfast, and clothes to our backs, and good roofs over our heads, and something to lay by against old age. Here is a man to get what we desire for us. Three cheers for Geoffry Pryor."

And the people cheered, and the people shouted, while Maxwell Drewitt took breath; and some cried out that it was all true, and others told him to go home—that he was a humbug, and that they would have nothing to do with him.

"Am I a humbug?" he yelled, almost cracking his voice in his efforts to make himself heard. "Am I a humbug? If I am, then humbugging must be a devilishly unprofitable trade. And as long as you have chosen to introduce this subject, I may say that I have given you as good proofs as any man

can, that, let my principles seem bad or the reverse in your eyes, I at least have adopted them in sincerity of heart—with integrity of purpose. All of you know that I had not much to give up, but still I have given up the little I had, and stand before you a man who, having relinquished everything for what he conscientiously believes to be the good of his country, has a right to claim from you, at any rate, a calm and impartial hearing."

"Go on, Max; we're listening."

"We're as quiet as mice in a meal bag."

"Go on, man. Go on, go on, go on."

"I know I am not so popular as my uncle," began Maxwell.

Cries of "Yes, yes, you are." "No you are not." "Finish your speech, the schoolmaster could not have laid it off better. Who wrote it for ye, Max?" "Go on, and don't keep us here all day. Go on, go on." And the crowd shouted and yelled and laughed, and Maxwell cursed the crowd in his heart while he proceeded.

"I am going on, if you will let me. I was saying that I know I am not so popular as my uncle."

"We mind that. Ye said it afore."

"He is a man who deserves all the love and respect you can give him, and I am sorry we should stand this day on opposite sides."

"Why don't ye go over till him then? He's near enough to ye."

"Why don't I go over to him? That brings me to the point I was wanting to reach. Let me ask you a few questions, and give you honest answers to them, and then you will see if you can still blame me for deserting the 'Dirty Blues.'

"Do you want to have a man of family representing you in Parliament? Yes. Then surely Mr. Sache cannot be your member!

"Do you want a gentleman? Mr. Sache can lay no claim to such a distinction!

"Do you want a person clever and fluent, able to lay your grievances before Parliament, and insist on their being redressed? Alas! my fellow-electors, Mr. Sache is no orator!

"Do you want a man of mind, capable of grasping facts, of comprehending the necessities and wishes of his fellows? Mr. Sache is not possessed of a second idea; his only one, and that a very small one indeed, being himself!

"Do you desire to do credit to yourselves by

sending a good man, an independent man, a man of talent and character, into the British Senate? If you do, you must never return Mr. Sache!

"Do you want a man—handsome, energetic, fearless? Look at your would-be member, voters of Duranmore—electors of West Connemara—look at your landlords' nominee! Look at the poor, frightened, incapable creature your tyrants want to compel you to select, and say if I, Maxwell Drewitt, were not right to choose a more energetic leader—one able and willing to battle out your cause against the United Kingdom, and to state your grievances to the world. Look at him, I say, and cheer that poltroon if you dare!"

It was probably the very audacity of this address which had kept his audience silent, for whenever Maxwell Drewitt, with hand stretched out towards Mr. Sache, with finger pointed at him, paused for a moment in his speech, there burst out upon the air such a tumult of laughing, cursing, joking, yelling, cheering, hissing, shouting, that the unfortunate object of the younger Drewitt's tirade looked wholly stupified and bewildered.

Lady Emmeline was so delighted that she clapped her little hands together with might and

main; she waved her eternal scarf over the heads of the multitude, and flung a bouquet towards Maxwell, which, falling short of the hustings, was caught by a man, who took off his battered and brimless hat, and said, "Thank ye kindly, my lady."

If anything had been wanting to make Colonel Vervensoe boil over, this would have settled the matter. Absolutely quivering with rage, he shook his fist in young Drewitt's face, and threatened him with condign punishment on the spot.

"Only lay a finger on me," said Maxwell, "and I pitch you head foremost into the crowd, who will soon make mincemeat of you. Stand back, sir, stand back!"

"If you say another word, Maxwell, you shall never darken my doors again," foamed Mr. Drewitt.

"Time enough for you to shut your doors when I show my face at them," retorted Maxwell. "Be quiet," he shouted, addressing the electors, "for I have still to tell you how your members have been returned hitherto. By bribery and corruption—by threats and intimidation—by turning the screw on poor men who had for the sake of their families to put pride and self-respect and independence, ay,

and common honesty in their pockets. You have been treated like slaves instead of like Irishmen. Why was O'Shane not successful? Because honest men were put out of the way, while rogues voted in their names; because refractory electors were kidnapped and carried off to Arran and Achill, and in one or two cases even to America; because men were made drunk and stripped naked, and left without a stitch to their backs, till the polling was over; because dead men were brought to life again; because tenants were threatened with expulsion; because Government posts were promised to the sons of the shopkeepers and small gentry; because the landlords formed a league against the men who enable them to live; because there was not an atom of honour or honesty amongst the friends and supporters of your taskmasters' nominee."

"Maxwell, I command you to be silent!" exclaimed Mr. Drewitt.

"My uncle commands me to be silent," persisted the young man, "but my conscience commands me to speak. As a boy I saw these things done, and held my peace; as a man I remember what I saw, and choose my side accordingly.

"How does the Earl of Popingham expect to win this election? By intimidation, by dead cats, such as this (and he dexterously caught one by the tail, and pitched it back in the face of the man who had thrown it at him), by the strong arm, by the might of rank, and power of money, and the majesty and omnipotence of landlordism. The things which have been done by the Conservatives are almost past my telling. Popingham's pets are among you now with orders to keep the reds back from the polling booths; they are wearing red rosettes; but you will be able to pick them out for all that when the time comes. As I rode into town this morning a lad told me Marsden had offered him half-a-crown to pelt the reds, but that he was willing to pelt Marsden himself for eighteenpence. Will you have this, fellow-countrymen? It only requires a vigorous effort on your part to free yourselves from the yoke. A long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether, and we will stand a respectable and independent body of electors, with a better man than any lordling's nominee representing us in Parliament." And amidst a Babel of cheering, groaning, clapping, and hissing, Maxwell concluded his speech.

"Now, Sache," whispered Lord Marsden.

"I have not a word to say. I—I couldn't do it."

"But you shall do it," said Mr. Munks. And he and Mr. Drewitt shoved him up to the front of the hustings.

What he said, however, or whether he ever said anything, nobody had the slightest idea. His speech appeared in the county paper, but it was generally supposed that the reporter wrote it himself.

He had the worst of the day's storm. Imprecations were shouted out against him. He was pelted, insulted, reviled. "How much does the Earl give you?" asked one wag.

"Doesn't the divil take care of his own, Sache?"

"Why don't you speak up like a man?"

"Couldn't they have got anybody betther than you?"

"Abbott wouldn't do their dirty work any longer."

"And it's betther to sup with a cutty than want a spoon."

"Spake up, man, spake up."

"They'll niver pay ye for the job if ye don't work for yer money."

"Go out o' that."

"Betther be a coward than a corp, Sache."

"Ye dirty blackguard."

"Who ate up Dan Joyce's crock o' butther?"

"Who counts the very chickens as they're chipping the shell?"

"Let him alone, can't ye? What's the use of pouring water on a drownded rat?"

"Don't look so scared, Sache; niver howl till ye're hurt."

"We won't hear ye; we'll bate ye black and blue. Go out o' that or there won't be an egg left in Duranmore."

"How do ye like it?"

"Do like the women: say no and take it." And at every sentence there arose a howl, and then came a shower of dirt and filth of all description.

"I never heard anything to equal this," said Mr. Pryor to his cousin.

"You'll have to run the gauntlet in a minute or two," answered Mr. Waller.

"It's good for the tailors, that's one comfort," observed Maxwell Drewitt.

"We want Pryor: go back and send out Pryor. Take him away, Munks, he's no credit till ye. I

wondher ye'd be seen out wid him. We're run short o' eggs, and we'll have to fall to the pavin' stones next. Take him out o' that. Pryor, Pryor; three cheers for Pryor, and three more for Butler, and a good one for Waller, and keep your best and longest for Lady Emmeline."

"Are you going to give me a hearing, my friends?" asked Geoffry Pryor, coming forward as Mr. Sache, who by this time presented a pitiable spectacle, drew back.

"No we're not. Yes we are. Ye'll be served worse than he was. Why did ye put on your best coat? ye might as well take it off and give it to me. It 'ud look mighty purty turned up wid yellow. See that now!"

"An there's a flower for your buttonhole."

"Have ye nearly done?" he demanded.

"No, we havn't begun. Why don't ye go on? Ye're as bad as Sache."

"Had you not better hear me first, and then speak yourselves afterwards?"

"No, we hadn't."

"Shall I not speak at all?"

"If it's any pleasure till ye, ye may." And then the people laughed and cheered and shouted, and

Geoffry Pryor went on to tell them how they were an oppressed and injured race; how justice had never been done to them; how the English knew nothing of the way in which the Irish lived; how everything was wrong in the management of the country; how he pledged himself to advocate the poor man's rights; how he would miss no opportunity of letting the English know of their manifold grievances.

"Every labourer is worthy of his hire," proceeded Mr. Pryor, "and the man who tills the ground should eat of its produce: you ought to have your land at such a rent that you can live off it, and not starve on it. Politically I am a thorough reformer; in religion I am for letting every man go to heaven his own road; and, in conclusion, I can only say, if you return me I shall try to serve you faithfully; if you do not return me I shall try to be content. I would entreat each man among you to vote according to his conscience: not for Sache or Pryor, not for red or blue, but for the right and the principle that is in him. And whatever the result of the contest may be, Mr. Sache," he added, turning towards his opponent, "I hope we shall be enemies only in

public, never in private life; and I should like, though I suppose such a proceeding is not usual on the hustings, to shake hands with you in token that ours is an amiable warfare."

And Mr. Pryor stretched out his hand to Mr. Sache, who had been, he felt, roughly dealt with. Perfectly stupified, however, with brandy and terror; bespattered from head to foot, with his cheek cut, and one eye closed up, Lord Popingham's nominee made no movement to take his opponent's offered hand till he was pushed forward by Mr. Drewitt, who, having lost patience with everybody, was in no very gentle or forbearing mood.

"The show of hands is in favour of the Reds," he said to Mr. Munks. "We must demand a poll."

And a poll was demanded accordingly; but the result was the same as the sheriff had declared the show of hands to be, viz., in favour of Geoffry Pryor.

In the days of which I am writing there was no earthly reason why an election should not have lasted for ever. Government had not then put any limit to the period over which the innocent amusement of breaking heads should extend. On

the contrary: as there was but one town in each county or portion of a county returning a separate member where votes could be legally polled, government seemed rather to have erred on the side of humouring the popular taste a little too far, than of considering it too little. Those were the palmy days of electioneering; those were the days of delightful uncertainty—of charming fluctuation. You were getting on to-day—you were far behind to-morrow; from hand to hand the political ball went tossing; now the Tories had it—now the Whigs. Now it was all up with the Reds—now the Blues had not a chance. As for trade! nobody even tried to transact any business while the election lasted, unless, indeed, the owners of public-houses and the landlords of hotels.

They took the business of the town and did it. If you had not a pair of shoes in the world, do you think any cobbler in the parish had leisure to attend to your wants? Was the rain pouring in through your roof, or your house falling down; were the spokes in the wheels of your gig rattling like castanets, or every pane of glass in your windows smashed? If you were not a glazier, wheelwright, bricklayer, or slater yourself, why,

windows, and wheels, and houses, and roofs must remain as they were till the members were returned—till the free and independent were sober and hungry once again.

It was carnival time—a time not of sweetmeats and bouquets, but of whiskey and fighting, of rotten eggs and blackthorn shillelaghs; a time when family feuds were established that would last rival houses for life, and be handed down as heirlooms to their posterity; when even sober men—sober and discreet—lost their heads and got drunk with political excitement; when wrongs were done that never could be righted subsequently; when words were spoken that never could be forgotten; when insults were uttered that could never be forgiven.

If the elections of those days were relics of the "good old times," we may fervently thank our stars that such times have passed away for ever.

Canvassing had seemed to Mrs. Drewitt a sufficiently weary season; but what was canvassing to making sure of the promised votes, to keeping the electors up to the mark?

Mr. Drewitt worked himself into a state of frenzy, and he and Colonel Vervensoe and Mr.

Munks and Lord Marsden and the Earl of Popingham, and a host of other influential Blues, went about the country like so many madmen, hunting up voters and bringing them to the polling-booth *nolens volens*.

If anything had been wanting to egg the Blues on to greater exertions, Maxwell Drewitt's speech would have proved a whip powerful enough to lash them to fury.

If Mr. Sache were not returned, every tenant should be ejected—every man who had a vote sent adrift; the cottages should be unroofed; the land might remain untilled; children might starve; women might die! From time immemorial have not the innocent suffered with the guilty? has not the house of Ahab always suffered for the sin of Ahab, from the time of Elijah until now.

Most of the landlords were kindly men—not proud, not uncourteous, not unfeeling; but they were, like the rest of us, weak on one point, and that point was politics. There is a savage in most which only requires waking to be dangerous. Spite of all our civilization we are forced at times to admit we must have come originally of a

rude stock, that we are closer to Jael, that we are nearer to Jehu than we would willingly confess.

The most delicate taste cannot distinguish between port and sherry in the dark; and in the same manner there is a mental darkness in which the tenderest conscience fails to discern the difference between right and wrong.

That was the state to which politics reduced men in the days of which I am writing; that is the state to which politics would reduce men now but for the extra vigilance of civilization, but for the coolness and calmness of the fourth estate, which will have none of it, which insists on pouring light in on darkness, of calling a spade a spade, let the implement so named be used by peer or peasant.

With the landlords I have mentioned the case was different—the savage was roused in them: blinded by passion, they stood, with the noon-day sun shining on them, in darkness.

It had become a question of might *versus* right —of lord against serf—of Protestant against Catholic — of "You shall" against "I shall not;" and such a question can never be solved

except by the result of the battle of man against man.

I am not advocating one side or another. God knows,—God who knows all things—that though the profession of each was different, there was not, long ago, a turn of the scale in favour of either Whig or Tory. Drewitt of Kincorth would have served his own father with notice to quit had his father voted against Sache. Waller of Eversbeg would have ejected every man on his estate had every man not chanced to want to return Pryor. There was no choice between them. It was war to the knife on both sides: and when war of any kind is being waged, men are not apt to be too particular.

Day by day the fight got fiercer, the combatants angrier. In the race each side strained every nerve for victory: all stratagems were allowed—all tricks were resorted to. It was a Derby where every man was trying to bribe his neighbour's jockey; where he was slyly trying to loosen his girths, to unbuckle his bridle, to lame the favourite. It was a boat-race where people strove not only to row their best, but endeavoured to prevent others rowing at all. If you can fancy

a three-mile heat, with the riders standing in their stirrups and lashing one another back; if you can imagine a rowing-match where, when hard run, the crew rose up and battered their opponents with their oars; if you can picture a battle without any order or regularity; if you can crowd into your mental canvas everything hoplelessly unfair, dishonest, brutal, mean, you may perhaps form some idea of Duranmore during the time which elapsed between the nomination and the return.

There was many a purse filled—there was many a spirit broken. Many a man thought of the children at home, and the tract of wretched land that he had done his miserable best to till; thought of how the children would cry for want of their potatoes; thought of the empty pot, of the lonely hill side, of the deserted cabin; and voted against his conscience. His opinions might not be right—more than probable they were all wrong—but they were not more wrong than those held by many of his betters; and his betters were able to vote as they liked, while he had to vote for the man he detested.

"If the masther 'ud just let me be, ma'am," said one poor fellow to Mrs. Drewitt, "it's meself

'ud niver go to the poll at all at all. I'd vot for Mr. Pryor if I could; but as it's not plazing to Mr. Drewitt, I'd raythor not vote for aither."

He had been artful, this uneducated Irishman: he had thought to get at the soft side of Mr. Drewitt through his wife; and Mrs. Drewitt herself imagined that so reasonable a request might be granted.

"He will never force Byrne to vote against his conscience," argued Mrs. Drewitt.

Wouldn't he though? Mr. Drewitt soon showed his wife the reverse of the picture; and the reverse was not pretty.

Byrne should vote or give up his lot.

"Then," said Byrne, "I will give up my lot; but if I do I'll vote for Pryor."

And he did.

After that Mr. Drewitt desired his wife not to allow any of his tenants to speak to her on the subject of the election. He knew she did not go with him in his ideas; that in fact she was getting perfectly bewildered with the strife of contending opinions; for which reasons he bade her send all reluctant voters to him.

"I understand them, and you do not," he said. "I know how to manage them; and they think they can manage you." And thus, happily for herself, Mrs. Drewitt was withdrawn from the political arena, and only permitted to look on at the fray.

What a fray it was!

"I have not been in bed for a week," said Maxwell Drewitt to Mr. Waller, on the morning which was to decide the result.

"Nor have I," answered the owner of Eversbeg; "but to-day will, I hope, repay us for all."

That was what the Blues were saying as well. They were sanguine of success also; so sanguine. that Mrs. Munks, and Lady Marsden, and a number of other ladies—Mrs. Drewitt amongst them, by her husband's special desire—took possession of the Assembly Room, to hear the earliest tidings concerning the winner.

Not to be behind on such an occasion, Lady Emmeline and her staff occupied the opposition benches. She and Colonel Vervensoe had not spoken to one another for a month previously, and it was currently reported that if Mr. Pryor got in he would never speak to her again. If, on

the other hand, Mr. Sache were returned, people believed that she would never speak to her husband.

There can be no doubt that the attitude assumed by this lady added greatly to the excitement of the election. In the Hickman family brother was against brother; among the Drewitts uncle and nephew were bitter opponents; but all this was nothing to husband and wife openly supporting different sides.

It was the flavouring to the soup; the sauce to the fish; the lemon to the punch. Without that element the election would have been, to a great extent, like other elections: as it was, in the memory of the oldest inhabitant there had never been such fun in Duranmore.

On the last day of the poll the town presented a perfectly indescribable scene of riot, misery, and contention.

Everything which had made the nomination rather a grand affair, tended to make the final combat wretched and squalid.

The wreaths were faded, the evergreens had turned brown, the arches were partly broken down, the flowers were dead, the banners were

torn, the rosettes were crumpled and soiled, the instruments of the respective bands having been used as weapons of offence and defence had come to grief, the leading men on both sides looked worn-out and jaded, the voters had hardly a whole coat among them; they were tired of fighting, they were weary of being dragged hither and thither, they had passed through every known stage of drunkenness, and many of them were by this time in a state of sickly sobriety.

Altogether the ball had lasted too long: the soldiers, the police, the musicians, the voters, the candidates—all were alike exhausted. No one seemed so bright as on the first day, excepting the ladies; and even some of them looked a little drooping.

Not so Lady Emmeline, however: whether she slept well or rouged well it is not for me to say, but the colour in her face was brilliant as the dye of her scarf.

"If we do not win I shall die," were her parting words to Maxwell Drewitt.

"We shall win," was his last answer. Every half-hour he despatched a messenger to tell her the state of the poll: every half-hour Geoffry

Pryor's chances seemed to brighten, while the anxiety of the Sacheites increased.

As the day wore on and the excitement became more intense, rioting began, and the fighting and pushing which had hitherto been confined to the neighbourhood of the polling-booth, spread through the crowd, till the row became general.

There could be no mistake about the matter now. The affair was growing serious, the people were getting earnest and dangerous. The Reds were cudgelling the Blues, and the Blues were paying back the Reds with interest. The authorities were beginning to be alarmed. There was a yell for the military, and every soldier settled himself more firmly in his saddle, and gathered up his reins, while he waited for the order to charge. Every spectator was holding his or her breath, waiting for "what next?" when suddenly a piercing scream rang out over the heads of the crowd, and a cry of "Save him!" issued from the windows of the Assembly Room.

For a moment the play of shillelaghs ceased in the centre of the market-place square, and Geoffry Pryor, in the very heart of that surging,

seething mass of human beings, could just distinguish two men struggling over a voter.

The fellow's coat was torn off his back, and Maxwell Drewitt, with his head bare, with clenched teeth, and with his face flushed and furious, was dragging him by one arm, while Mr. Drewitt was tugging him away by the other. The elder and more powerful man seemed to be getting the best of it, when, quick as thought, a stick whizzed through the air and came down on Mr. Drewitt's skull. He dropped on the instant, and as he dropped there was a rush of the rabble to one side, and right over his body rode a company of hussars.

Then the light left Geoffry Pryor's eyes; a death-like sickness came over him, and he fainted away.

The whole scene, which it has taken me so long to describe, was acted out almost in a second; and next moment eager hands were raising the owner of Kincorth from the ground.

"My God, he's dead!"

"Och, docther, dear, say that the life's not out of him!"

"Bleed him, docther darlint."

"For the sake of the blessed Vargin, lift him aisy."

"Oh, swate father! what is this at all at all?"

"Keep the craythur back. Shure it's the young wife he married only the other day."

But Agnes Drewitt would not be kept back. Unmindful of the crowd, heedless of danger or difficulty, she made her way towards the knot collected round her husband.

"Doctor," she said, "you must bring him back to me. He is not dead: tell me he is not dead."

"Carry him to my house. I can do nothing here," was all the answer he made; but he pulled Mrs. Drewitt forcibly from her husband's side, and keeping her hand in his, followed close behind.

The doctor's house was not fifty yards distant, but to Agnes Drewitt it seemed fifty miles.

The mob closed up again as they passed through, and, as in some terrible dream, she heard loud shouts and continuous yells and oaths and threats and curses.

Very vaguely it seemed to her as though she had crossed into a frightful eternity in which the tumult of earth was still distinctly audible.

Behind her lay the great battle-field of the contested election, where her husband had fought for what he thought the right so gallantly and so

ong. To her it was all gone and past: gone with its excitement, its sorrow, its shock, its trouble.

She felt stupified, she felt stunned. As she crossed the threshold of the doctor's house, she scarcely heard a prolonged howl of anger and disappointment that rent the summer air.

"What's that?" cried Lady Emmeline, starting up; but next moment she sat back in her seat, clenching her hands together and beating her little foot in impotent rage against the floor.

"It's lost! it's all over!" she shrieked out. And she was right. At the eleventh hour every one of the tenants she had promised Mr. Pryor were marched up to the polling-booth by her husband, where they recorded their votes for Mr. Sache.

They turned the fate of the day.

"That settles it!" muttered Ryan, with a fearful oath; and he was right, for Geoffry Pryor was beaten, and the Earl of Popingham's nominee had won!

CHAPTER VIII.

NOT DEAD.

If there be one thing under heaven for which more than another the lower order of Irish have a passion, it is for offering medical advice; and accordingly, whenever the eager crowd who had hustled and shoved their way after the "body," as they called Mr. Drewitt, beheld him safely deposited on Doctor Sheen's bed, they opened fire on that gentleman in a style which set at defiance the knowledge of Apothecaries' Hall, and might have made the whole College of Surgeons stand aghast.

"Lay him down there," growled the doctor. "Gently, gently—do you hear?—and not as if he was a sack of potatoes: and now be off, everyone of you; I don't want you here."

"But, Doctor dear——"

"Open an artery. Och! see if the blood 'll come. Sweet father, what 'll we do at all—at all? Musha—oh! Wirrastrue."

"Jist touch him in the arm"—improved another—"a bit above the elbow—where Sergen Brabsen—long life till him—put the lance in me and brought me back after I died of the squinazy."

"Could ye not put a dhrop o' spirit down his throat, Docthor darlint?" suggested a fourth; "it might lift his heart again."

"Do, an' may the heavens be yer bed: we'll dhrink ye're health night and day, an'——"

"Come, be off!" interrupted Doctor Sheen. "I can't do with you crowding about me, yelling enough to pull the house down."

"If ye'd put a feather till his nose," broke forth the first speaker with greater vehemence than ever, "I can catch one of the hens in a minit, or let me hould a bit av a lookin' glass afore his mouth."

"An' fit his arm straight in place: see how it hings."

"An' look if the skull's knocked in entirely, an'

pick out the broken bits afore they get down intil his brains."

"Pick them up with the pincers, and then join them cleverly."

"An' sen' for ould Peggy Magore; shure she has dhrinks made out o' herbs that would entice a corpse to speak, if it could only be made to swally them."

"An' docthor, wouldn't ye let his head down a bit?"

"An' lift his feet on a pillow?"

"And feel if there's a ticking in either of his heels?"

Which last speech bearing, as it did, on the idea that before death a pulse may be felt in the heel, produced such a wailing and mourning—such laments over the man who had been taken from them—such tributes to his virtues—such regrets for his untimely end—that at length Doctor Sheen fairly lost his patience, and shoving the loudest of the talkers out of the room, and ordering the rest to follow, he locked and double-locked the door, and found himself alone with his patient, Mrs. Drewitt, and his assistant.

Without, there was noise and riot and shouting

and fighting: within, there was silence like the grave: without was life; within, the shadow of the angel of death.

No one in the room spoke a word while Doctor Sheen felt Mr. Drewitt's pulse, opened his coat, waistcoat, and shirt, and placed his hand on his heart; but when at last he looked up doubtfully, Mrs. Drewitt said—

"Doctor, he shall not die?"

"Very well, ma'am," answered the doctor, and pressed his fingers on Mr. Drewitt's wrist once more.

Then Doctor Sheen whispered something in the assistant's ear, to which the assistant replied:

"No, only stunned."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it," answered the other; "haven't I had dozens of them here just as bad?"

"But not with that," said Doctor Sheen, still speaking in so low a tone that his words could not reach Mrs. Drewitt, and pointing as he spoke to Mr. Drewitt's head, "but not with that."

"And what's that?" inquired the assistant contemptuously; "he'll be all right again in a week;" and he took the injured arm, and began mani-

pulating it, as though he were playing a tune on a piano.

"There you are," he said. "Harder, sir, harder; his pulse is not in his skin; give him time, there's no hurry; he's coming as fast as he can. Now I'd give five shillings," added the young man, stepping back and surveying Mr. Drewitt, "I'd give five shillings to know where he has been."

"Where who has been?" asked Mrs. Drewitt, turning her face, which was wet with tears, towards the speaker.

"Where your husband has been, ma'am; all our anatomy won't teach us that; it's a good quarter of an hour since he went away, and he is only coming back again now—here he is,"—and as he said the word Mr. Drewitt opened his eyes.

With a little cry of thanksgiving his wife fell on her knees beside him. She had been afraid to say she feared before; but now the very excess of her joy proved how great had been her previous dread.

"I will be quiet," she said, as Doctor Sheen tried to draw her from the room; "I will be quiet—you need not be afraid of me again—I won't say a

word: you may trust me, indeed—indeed you may."

"I am going to set his arm," persisted Doctor Sheen, "and see to this cut in his head, and——"

"And there is no one so fit to stay here as I am," she interposed eagerly: "you would wish me to remain, you would like me to be near you—would not you, Archy?"—and she looked into the scarcely conscious eyes half hidden by a weight of heavy eyelid while she waited for an answer.

Archibald Drewitt could not answer her; she had not been accustomed to illness, poor soul, or she might have known better than to expect it; but he made a vain effort to turn towards her—a faint attempt to move his uninjured arm and clasp her hand in his.

It was too much; a more ghastly pallor came over his face, the eyelids closed again, and——

"He's dead! he's dead!" exclaimed his wife, starting up and endeavouring to throw herself on the body, but Mr. Murphy prevented this.

"Dead, ma'am!" he said, still keeping a firm hand on her shoulder: "dead, ma'am! he's worth a dozen dead ones yet. Now—now"—and Mr. Murphy patted her back, apparently under the

delusion that she was a baby choking—"do be reasonable and just leave him to us. He's not dead, and isn't going to die. So far as this goes, he may live to bury you;" and without any more ceremony the young man walked Mrs. Drewitt out of the room, and sat her down in the surgery, where he left her alone, after having procured for her a well-thumbed copy of "Clarissa Harlowe," which would, he said, "serve to divert her mind."

"And keep yourself easy, ma'am," he finished, "for Mr. Drewitt will be about again, in no time."

"You should be more careful, Murphy," remarked Doctor Sheen that same night, when he and his assistant were seated together over their respective tumblers of punch. "I did not exactly like your saying to Mr. Drewitt that her husband might bury her. Some of the English don't take those kind of things."

"Well, wasn't I right?" demanded the other; "mayn't he bury her? isn't he going on as well as a man could go on? and won't he live to have sons of his own, please God, and keep Maxwell out of the estate?"

"He has been here three times this evening to ask after him," said Doctor Sheen, reflectively.

"And did he seem sorry when he heard it was for Kincorth, and not for the Abbey, his uncle was bound?"

"No, he seemed glad."

"Did he now?"

"And he says he did not strike the blow."

"Who ever thought he did? He had not a stick in his hand at all."

"His aunt did not know that, for she went on at him, and he could not edge in a word till she was tired; but then he began, and told her this, that, and the other, till he got round her completely: she's as soft as salve, and she begged his pardon, and they are now as thick as thieves. Oh! faith," added the Doctor, "and it's Master Maxwell Drewitt that can wile the bird off a bush when he likes. It's a wonderful tongue he has: to hear him sometimes, you would think butter could not melt in his mouth."

"And to hear him at others you would know cheese would not choke him," said Mr. Murphy, who had his own reasons for disliking Maxwell.

"Still it's a great pity of the young fellow," said Doctor Sheen, mixing himself another tum-

bler of punch, "for he ought to have had Kincorth."

"It would have been a greater pity of other people if he had had it," remarked Mr. Murphy; in which opinion, however, he chanced to be wrong.

No man could have done worse for other people than Archibald Drewitt, who, spite of Mr. Murphy's hopeful predictions, lay between life and death for more than a month at Doctor Sheen's, during which time the house was besieged with visitors and inquiries.

"You must pull him through, Sheen," said the Earl of Popingham. "We cannot afford to lose Mr. Drewitt."

"You need never show your face at the Hall again if he is not able to ride to the first meet this season," chimed in Colonel Vervensoe, while Mr. Pryor, Mr. Waller, and all the Reds were, if possible, more eager in their anxiety, more impatient for good tidings, than the Blues.

"But he will get through it, won't he, Murphy?" asked Mr. Waller one day when he had met Doctor Sheen's assistant on the road near Eversbeg, and insisted on taking him up to the

house for lunch. "There is no fear now, is there?"

"No; he is out of danger; that is, he is out of danger now, so far as we know. He will do, if he takes care of himself. His arm is the worst; we can't make a good job of that at all. It was a beautiful case, and a splendid fracture; but it will never be a good arm again."

"Will it hinder his hunting?" asked young Waller, who thought anything that stopped a man's course across country the most grievous misfortune possible.

"Hinder his hunting? Is it the like of that would keep Mr. Drewitt back, do you think? If that was all, couldn't he ride with the bridle in his teeth, like a gentleman I knew down in Tipperary? You may believe me or not, Mr. Waller, just as you like," proceeded Mr. Murphy; "but he had neither arms nor legs, and yet he hunted as regularly as you do."

"I'd go from here to there to see him," was Mr. Waller's only reply.

"And, indeed, it's himself would make you welcome," answered Mr. Murphy; "that is, if

he's alive; there was not a funnier fellow nor a harder drinker in the county."

"My cousin was round seeing Mr. Drewitt the other day," remarked Mr. Waller.

"Yes, but he did not see him," said the assistant. "He had a long talk with Mrs. Drewitt. We're glad of anybody that will keep her out of the sick room; and Mr. Pryor wanted to get speech with some of them."

"Yes," said the other, "he was going back to London, and wished to express his regret and all the rest of it. Upon my conscience, I never was so frightened in my life. He went down—Pryor, I mean—as if he had been shot. Fainted dead away."

"He ought to take three tumblers of punch every night going to bed," observed Mr. Murphy; "it would strengthen his nervous system."

"He was delighted with Mrs. Drewitt—came home here in perfect raptures about her. She did not strike me as being anything remarkable."

"Miss Susan Drewitt is a handsome woman," answered Mr. Murphy; "but Mrs. Drewitt is more of a woman—do you understand me, sir? She has not much spirit, but she has a sweet

temper. She is pretty, to my taste; and for a woman, I consider her uncommonly sensible—uncommonly," and Mr. Murphy drained a bumper to her health, after which he suddenly recollected that Dr. Sheen would be expecting him, and rose to take his departure.

"When do you think of moving him?" asked Mr. Waller.

"In about a week's time, if he goes on well," said Mr. Murphy. "We are to have down a mighty easy carriage from Lord Marsden's, and I think it won't hurt him. It must be uncomfortable for Mrs. Drewitt staying at Dr. Sheen's, though we do our best; and this much I'll say for her," added Mr. Murphy, "that an easier-pleased or an easier-served lady I would never wish to see. She makes no fuss and she gives no trouble, and, for my own part, I wish she was to live in the house for ever."

As for Mrs. Drewitt herself, she was Mr. Murphy's friend for life. What she would have done without him during that illness she never knew. He did not seem to know the meaning of the word despondency.

"It was a doctor's business to cure, to be sure

it was. When a doctor could not cure, send for the nurse, and a coffin, and a lawyer to make the will; but till Mrs. Drewitt saw the lawyer, at any rate, she ought not to give way."

He went up to Kincorth for her. He did her errands; he posted her letters; he kept watch while she slept; he told her stories; he listened to her while she talked about England.

"That's the place I'd like to go to," he said. "What chance has a man in a place like this? a man that is a man, I mean, and has any push in him. What do you see in a place like this, but broken heads and fever, and children being born, and old men and women dying? Except, may be, an odd case of cancer, middle-aged people never die of any out-of-the-way disease. A child could prescribe for them. And as for work, ma'am, nobody in London would credit it! Doctor Sheen is the dispensary doctor, you know. Well, if we were earning ten thousand a year each out of it, there could not be more expected from us. They come in the middle of the night here, and ring—ring—ring, just as if one ought to be standing behind the door waiting to answer it, and then, 'It's the misthress is taken ill, and ye're to come

at wanst,' and then we've to go through the rain and the snow and the wind to find the woman. 'Sorry to have given us the thrubble, but when she sint she was very bad, entirely.' I'd like well to go to London, I would. Perhaps I might be there before I'd die."

"But you must remember, Mr. Murphy," Mrs. Drewitt was wont to say, "that the streets are not paved with gold there, though I know many country people imagine they are."

"True, ma'am; but they must be full of patients. I have always fancied that there must be some place on the face of God's earth where, if men are willing to work hard, they may gather abundantly; but let that place be where it will, it is not Duranmore."

All of which set Mrs. Drewitt thinking, and wondering more and more what Maxwell was to do. Would he come back to Kincorth, she marvelled? Would her entreaties avail now? After what had happened, would he listen to her? Give her the opportunity and she would try. And Maxwell gave her the opportunity by asking if he could assist her in any way when she was removing his uncle to Kincorth.

"Can I help—may I help?" he said eagerly; but Mrs. Drewitt answered—

"I am afraid to let him see you for the present. I do not wish to speak to him about you; about the election, I mean, for a little while. But I should like you to return to Kincorth. I know he will be glad, when he is better, to hear you are under the same roof with him. I can take so much on my own responsibility, Maxwell; and I do take it, and ask you most earnestly to come back to us once more."

"I have started on my road," he said, "and I may not retrace my steps; but I thank you all the same. Whenever he is strong enough to see me, tell me to come, and I will come to Kincorth, though not to stay there."

"I wish there was not any Kincorth standing between us," answered Mrs. Drewitt, very truthfully, "and that we could all live at peace together."

"Perhaps we may, some day," was Maxwell's reply. He was thinking of the vow he had made to himself, of the time when he was to be rich and his uncle poor.

Would there be peace then? When the tables

were turned—when he was the benefactor, could he afford to let bygones be bygones; could he then be generous enough to say, let there be peace between us at last?

That was what he was wondering while Mrs. Drewitt stood silent and looked in his face, and marvelled what made its expression change so swiftly and vary so often.

There came a day when she knew all, when she hated Maxwell more than he had ever hated his uncle; when she spurned his proffered kindnesses, when there was war waged between them, war to the death, which ended but with life.

Had anyone told Mrs. Drewitt then that she could ever learn to prefer strife to peace, she would have declared it was impossible; and yet as time went by the impossible grew possible, and the possible came to pass.

But at that early stage of her married life Mrs. Drewitt had no strong interests blinding her, no feeling in favour of this person or against that, warping her judgment and leading her astray.

She loved her husband, who owned Kincorth; she was sorry for Maxwell, who did not own it; but at the same time Mr. Drewitt, whom she loved,

was master for life, while his nephew had not a penny.

Reverse the cases, and how would Mrs. Drewitt have felt? That, my reader, is what we shall find out when the tale of the years is completed—when the story of the years is told.

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. DREWITT UNDERSTANDS.

It was winter—winter on the grand sea-coast—winter among those everlasting hills; and Agnes Drewitt came to understand how the season might be more endurable in the country than in London; came to see how the breakers dashing on the rocks—how the waves rolling up on the shore—how the mountains covered with snow—how the swelling streams, and the roaring torrents might be less monotonous and depressing than the fine perspective of a London street, or the exhilarating spectacle of a yellow fog.

She was beginning to like Kincorth. Home—be it ever so homely, ever so lonely, ever so uncomfortable—has a great charm for a woman like Mrs. Drewitt; and though her lot was in many

respects not an enviable one, still she was becoming reconciled to it. She was growing to know the people and to like them; she was contriving how to get her household into more orderly ways. She had talked with her husband, and got him to consent to see Maxwell. Altogether, on the particular afternoon of which I am speaking, Mrs. Drewitt did not feel unhappy.

She was going out for a walk, a long walk, all by herself; and after long confinement to the house, after constant attendance on an invalid, the idea of fresh air, of a little pilgrimage beside Duranmore Bay, all round Eversbeg Head, and so on nearly to Eversbeg Abbey, did not prove unpleasant.

She had been rather a prisoner since her arrival in Ireland, and freedom seemed sweet. She had never been round Eversbeg Head, which she could see so plainly from her bedroom windows. She had never been very near the Atlantic, for she did not call Duranmore Bay the Atlantic; and she wanted to dip her hand in it for once, and write to her sister, "I have touched the great ocean." She longed to stand on some point of land whence she could see thousands and thousands of miles away. She had some vague notion,

I fancy, of getting a glimpse of America; but be this as it may, she intensely enjoyed the idea of the walk, and meant to make the most of it.

"There is a much nearer way you know, Auntie," said Kathleen, "thrau the road by Eversbeg Head; but if you wish to get a good view of the Atlantic, you must go by the coast. It is not a nice clear day, though. You ought to have seen it in fine weather."

"Oh! I think it a lovely day," answered Mrs. Drewitt, and as she walked along, while the wind drove the clouds before her, she repeated to herself that it was lovely—that she had never enjoyed anything so much in all her life before.

The election had long been over. Mr. Sache and his family were in Dublin, and the "Castle," as he somewhat pompously called his house—a building all wings and turrets and loopholes and weathercocks—was left in charge of servants.

Duranmore had subsided into its state of normal dullness. Fishermen mended their nets, labourers went about their accustomed work, the shopkeepers did their usual small amount of business. There was no more fighting in the streets, the public-houses were emptied of the crowds of

drunken men that had once filled them full to overflowing. The Earl and Countess of Popingham were in France, Lord Marsden in Rome, Mr. and Mrs. Munks in London, and thus Mrs. Drewitt had, after a fashion, the country to herself, to enjoy thoroughly and completely, if she liked.

And she did like. She loved to look at the mountains with the clouds flying fast over them as though hurrying, hurrying away. She loved the wild hills, the distant ravines, the rivers that came bounding down from the far-off heights and went rushing to the sea. She loved the bay when the waters were dark like the sky, when the waves came up towards Duranmore, that was now so quiet and orderly. She loved to pause and look at the whitewashed cottages, at the pretty, picturesque children, who hung their curly heads abashed as the lady passed by. She loved the salutation of the country people, some of whom "made bould to ask her how the masther was." She was not a stranger among strangers now. She was taking root in the soil, and learning to love the very shamrocks in the grass.

She left Duranmore behind her, and still went

on. Spite of recent rains the granite road was hard and dry beneath her feet. Above her head the high wind drove the clouds before it. "You are going to England," she thought, "but I do not wish to be travelling there with you now." The western breeze blew a colour into her cheeks, and disarranged her hair, and lifted her veil, and kissed her sweet face caressingly.

"I love the wind," she thought; "it is fresh and pure, and it comes from travelling over the great sea, instead of bringing the taint of large cities on its breath;" and she turned, even while she was thinking this, round Eversbeg Head, and the wide Atlantic and the full force of the western breeze burst upon her at once.

Thousands of miles! Millions upon millions of tossing billows! Oh! thou great God Almighty! who can look across the restless ocean and not think of Thee! Who can forget, while standing by the sea and watching the great waters come thundering upon the shore, that Thou hast set bounds to the waters and said, "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed"—who, looking over the trackless expanse of ocean, but must feel that all unseen the feet of the Most High have traversed it?

'When we see this work of the Lord, His wonders in the deep; when we perceive how at His command the floods arise, and how at His word the storm ceases; when we remember that though the waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly, still that the Lord God who dwelleth on high is mightier; when we think that he holds the waters in the hollow of his hand, do we not seem for a moment, amid raging tempests and foaming billows, to catch a glimpse of the Infinite? Looking over the waste of waters, does not our weak mortality appear able to grasp for an instant the idea of immortality? Can we not imagine that no material horizon bounds our view—that we are gazing away and away across the ocean into eternity?

Thousands of miles, friends! Which of us has not at one time or other let his heart go free over the waters? Who has not stood by the shore silent, while his inner self—his self that never talks save to his God and his own soul—has gone out from his body and tossed with the billows, and answered the sullen roar of the waters, and risen and sunk with the waters as they rose and fell, rose and fell, and felt the breaking of the

foam, the sobbing plash of the great ocean, as it rolls up on the sands and over the rocks and stones and shells of earth, while depth calleth unto depth and the giant floods clap their hands together?

And oh! with what a terrible sadness does that second self come back to us! It has been out listening to strange voices, hearing strange sounds, learning solemn truths. It has been out on the billows, on the foam, among the spray and the clouds and the tempest—out and away to the very confines of the invisible world. It has been restless like the ocean, and it comes back to be set within the bounds of flesh; it has been free, and behold it must return to chains and fetters; it has been telling of its troubles to the ocean, and the ocean has lift up its mighty arms and mourned out its sorrowful reply.

Mourning—mourning—never silent, never still—now lashing itself up into fury—now tossing hither and thither as it seems to us without plan or purpose; now wave following after wave, as man follows after man in the ranks of a vast army; now flinging its waters on the shore—now striving to climb the steep sides of some rugged rock; fretting itself as we fret ourselves—moaning

as we moan—toiling as we toil—restless as we are; now receding—now advancing—but never at peace; in its strong moods wild and tumultuous—in its calmest moments stirred by the ground swell, ruffled by the lightest breeze!

Well may man love this deep, inexplicable, unfathomable ocean, for as it through the ages has gone on sobbing and mourning and struggling, so man through the years of his life goes mourning and struggling too.

Some thoughts like these passed through Mrs. Drewitt's mind as she stood at the base of Eversbeg Head, and looked out over the Atlantic. She had never seen anything like it before; the ocean had never filled her heart and saddened it till now.

Though not much of a traveller, she had, liko most people, known the sea in its quieter aspect. She had visited Brighton; she had been to Hastings; she had seen the flat Norfolk coast, and beheld the mud banks in the Essex Hundreds; but the sea in any of the places I have mentioned was not like the sea that broke over the rocky headlands of the wild West; neither was the desolate shore she stood on like unto the civilized

shores she was once familiar with, where bathing boxes were drawn up on the shingle, and men and women walked upon the parade, and the bare windows of lodgings to let looked out above the calm blue waters.

An unromantic lady—middle-aged, shall we say—and with no particular beauty of face or figure, who pursues the even tenour of her unexciting life, is of the same genus, doubtless, as Lady Macbeth, Joan of Arc, or Mary Queen of Scots. Naturalists would declare them to be all women together; but then they were different women, and not much alike, we may suppose, in personal appearance.

It is thus with the sea: we have now the respectable matron, and anon the queen of tragedy; we have the smooth face, the well-established conventionalities; the world's customs in one place, in another we have anger and passion, and wild beauty and rugged grandeur; and, above all, thousands of miles of ocean, millions of tossing billows.

She had never seen anything like it—never seen such a sea under such a sky before; never seen a vessel out before in rough weather; never

thought to look upon such an expanse of angry waters as now met her view.

She turned and looked towards Kincorth. There, secure on the hill-side, it stood in its tranquil beauty; she looked further north still, towards Duranmore Point, and saw it gloomy and impassable, stretching out into the sea. Far and far out she could tell where the sunken rocks lay—she knew by the sheets of white foam that broke upon them; to her left, on the other side of Eversbeg Bay, she saw a low green hill—green even under that wintry sky, which looked calm and tranquil, though the wild waves were dashing round and about it. Up the bays the water rolled dark and sullen, but still calm by comparison with what they looked out to seaward.

Among the billows a ship was labouring and striving, and when Mrs. Drewitt reluctantly pursued her onward way, she left it making with caution for Duranmore Bay, putting in there out of the way of the coming storm.

"'And so He bringeth them into the haven where they would be,'" murmured Mrs. Drewitt, as she neared her own destination.

Did she ever forget her first view of the great

Atlantic, do you imagine, my reader? Did the stormy ocean, those foaming billows, those restless waves ever fade out of her memory as the years went by?

When she passed, in a far different place, to the haven which God had appointed for her, was not the roar of those mighty waters still in her ears? did she not feel like that reeling vessel, weary of the struggle with the winds and the waves? and was she not glad to turn into any harbour where she might be at rest?

Thinking of the boundless Atlantic, she continued on her way, till she came to a tract of poor, barren land, on the very edge of Eversbeg Bay, which tract of land was Maxwell Drewitt's sole inheritance.

A child whom she met on the way gladly turned back and showed Mrs. Drewitt which was Headlands Cottage.

Headlands Cottage! Headlands Hovel would have been nearer the mark, she thought, as she knocked with her knuckles at the door, which, for a wonder in that description of house, was shut.

Maxwell Drewitt answered her summons in

person, and requested her to enter his poor habitation with all the courtesy of a grand seigneur.

The cabin—for it was nothing better than a cabin—contained but two rooms, in one of which Maxwell slept, whilst he lived, read, ate, wrote, and planned in the other.

He had an old woman who came in and "did for him," so he explained to his aunt, and who, being at that present moment in a kitchen which he had extemporized out of a cow-shed, would be happy to make Mrs. Drewitt a cup of tea if she wished for it.

"But in any case," finished Maxwell, "I will tell her to bring it in;" and he left the room to do so, while Mrs. Drewitt looked round at her leisure.

There was a blazing turf fire on the hearth, and near the fire stood a common deal table covered with books, papers, and plans. The apartment boasted two chairs, and Mrs. Drewitt occupied one of them.

The floor was of earth, swept clean; the walls were whitewashed; the roof was unceiled, and between the blackened rafters she could see the thatch. Besides the table and chairs, the room

boasted no other furniture of any kind, sort, or description, except a writing-desk and a hair trunk. The walls were decorated with pistols, guns, riding-whips, and fishing-rods. It was in a place like this Maxwell Drewitt had elected to make his first start in life, and Mrs. Drewitt could not help admiring him for it.

I wish I were able to sketch that room for you. I should like to show how the firelight fell on Maxwell's dark face; how the shadows lay on the floor while the gloom of the winter evening gathered, deepened and deepened, out of doors.

There was no false pride about Maxwell Drewitt. He had that virtue, at any rate. If the king had called, in passing, the young man would have felt no shame about receiving royalty in the only house he owned; and for this reason Mrs. Drewitt found that it was impossible for her to speak about the place in which she found him. She could as soon have remonstrated with an Indian on the inconvenience of living in a wigwam as she could have talked to her nephew concerning his abode.

It was his, and he was a gentleman, and he had chosen it for himself. She had no more right to come there and pity him for his earthen floor and

his scant furniture than royalty would have to find fault with the dinner-service at Kincorth.

Headlands Cottage was Maxwell Drewitt's castle, and being his castle, Mrs. Drewitt respected it.

"She had come to speak to him about many things," she said. "First of all, your uncle is much better—almost well again, thank God, and he is able and wishful to see you. I thought, perhaps, you would come back with me this evening," she hesitated; "but in case you were unable to do so, I told one of the men to walk a little way on this side Duranmore to meet me."

"I have an appointment for this evening," answered Maxwell, "but I will walk back with you as far as the lodge gates."

"And when will you come to Kincorth?" she asked.

"To-morrow, if it be convenient to you," he said.

"As if any time were inconvenient!" she exclaimed; "as if I should not be only too glad to see you back there, for good and all, I mean."

"I have got so far on my road," he replied, "I am not likely to try another now."

"But, Maxwell," she inquired, "what are you going to do? Forgive me if I seem impertinent; but

how are you going to live? Do you mean to stay here? What do you purpose doing for money?"

"I purpose to work for it," he answered, "and I mean to obtain it. I know you only ask what my plans are, out of kindness, and I, therefore, cannot consider any question impertinent. You must not, however, think me rude if I reply that men are not like women; they do not act from impulse; they do not commence to build without counting the cost; they do not start on a journey without knowing something of the land towards which they are travelling. To speak more plainly still, I did not leave Kincorth without sketching out a plan for my own future, and I mean to perfect that plan if I can. When I have perfected it, you shall see the result. Meantime, be satisfied," he added, with a smile. "I have food, I have raiment. I have a roof to cover me, and I have a fire at which to warm myself withal. More than this," he went on, "it is all mine own; that is, mine, so long as I pay my rent punctually. If you came round Eversbeg you must have passed some land which is mine without paying rent at all, and in another year I mean to have it in my own hands. This farm joins my land, so I have my

territories close together, and there is a small house on my freehold which, when once Blake gives up possession, I mean to have put into thorough repair, and where I hope you will come and see my improvements."

"Then you never mean to return to Kincorth ?" she said. "Never ?"

He looked at her, and then he looked into the fire, and then he flung on a few more peats before he answered—

"I may, perhaps, but you ought not to wish me to do so."

"Why ?" she asked ; and as he only laughed in reply, she went on. "You always speak in riddles, Maxwell. What do you mean ?"

"You really wish to know ?"

"I do ; of course I do."

"Then I will tell you before you go. Now, what else did you want to speak to me about ?"

"About your sisters—about twenty things. First about your sisters. They are a great care to me, Maxwell. I do not know what I ought to do. I do not know if I can do anything."

"What is the particular emergency ?" inquired Maxwell.

"Their position is not what it ought to be," she explained, "and I cannot make it different. If Susan and Wilhelmina would do their parts," she continued, "things might be better; but they seem to take a delight in thwarting all my plans. Wilhelmina rides from morning till night. She visits with people your uncle does not seem to know and that I have never seen. She will not read or practice, or improve herself in any way; and as for Susan—" but here Mrs. Drewitt paused.

"Well, what about Susan?" he asked.

"There is a Captain Ellenham who is always about the house," said his aunt; "always with Susan," and she stopped again.

"He is possibly in love with her," remarked Maxwell, with a smile, "though it does not say much for his taste."

"But if he were in love with her," argued Mrs. Drewitt, "should he not want to see her uncle, to see me, to ascertain how her family were likely to receive him? There is a secrecy about it which puzzles me. I do not wish to speak to your uncle, but I thought that you——"

"I do not wish to have anything to do with

Susan's affairs," answered Maxwell, shortly; "I think my uncle is the proper person to interfere."

"And Wilhelmina?"

"Wilhelmina will not hurt, unless she gets her neck broken some of these days."

"And Kathleen?"

"What about Kathleen?" asked Maxwell, raising his head and looking at Mrs. Drewitt.

"Nothing, only your uncle wants her to be sent to school: now, Maxwell, ought I to let her go? I can teach her all she needs to learn; I can see to her when she is ill; and she is such a comfort to me, I am so fond of her—so fond!"

"But still, would it not be better for her to go to school?" asked Maxwell. "Would the companionship of girls of her own age not be desirable? would the early hours, the regularity, the whole discipline of a school not be good for her? If Susan and Willy had been sent away they might have been different to what they are. You will never have time to attend to Kathie. Altogether, if my uncle be willing to pay for her, it is best she should go."

"You think so?"

"I do."

"But she is so delicate."

"She will be stronger out of Galway."

"And we are so fond of each other."

"That is quite another matter," said Maxwell, and then, to his amazement, Mrs. Drewitt began to cry.

His decision was different to what she had expected it would be, and she and Kathleen had agreed to abide by that decision.

"I feel certain," he said, "that you would rather do what is best for Kathleen's future than what you and she would like in the present. I think it is a good thing for her to go to school, but of course that is a matter for you and my uncle to settle."

"It is for you to settle," answered Mrs. Drewitt, "and she shall go to school. Now, about another thing, Maxwell. What kind of a woman is Lady Emmeline Vervensoe?"

"You know almost as much of her as I do," was his reply; "you saw her at the election. You may judge from that very much what she is."

"She has been often over to Kincorth lately," said his aunt; "she seems to wish to be very intimate with me; she is very kind and very attentive, but your uncle does not like her much, and——'

"It is not to be expected he would like her after the part she took against Mr. Sache," laughed Maxwell. "So far as I know, Lady Emmeline has not any harm about her; she is much wiser, in my opinion, than Mrs. Munks, and she is a great deal prettier. I think you would get on very well together, and that you might find her a pleasant acquaintance. Does my uncle not wish you to visit her?"

"He is very great friends with Colonel Vervensoe, you know," answered Mrs. Drewitt; "but we cannot have him, at least I do not like having him, without his wife, and I thought I would ask you about Lady Emmeline."

"There is nothing against her, if that is what you mean," Maxwell replied: "she is perfectly and unexceptionably proper, although she did wear a red scarf at the election and canvass her husband's tenantry. But then, really they are as much her tenants as his. She has more money than he, and gives it to him freely enough, I believe. I have not seen her these two months."

"So she told me," remarked Mrs. Drewitt; "she was asking me where you were and what you were doing."

"How very kind!" laughed Maxwell. "I should have thought so insignificant a person far beneath her ladyship's notice," and Maxwell laughed again.

"I must go now," said Mrs. Drewitt, rising to depart; "it is getting dusk, and Kathie will be uneasy. Now do not think of coming with me, Patrick is certain to be somewhere on the road; I left a message for him."

"You must not deny me the pleasure of being your escort for all that," answered Maxwell, and the two left the heat of the blazing turf-fire and walked back together by the nearer road to Kincorth. As they walked they talked—about Ireland, about her scenery, about her people, about her wrongs, about her want of prosperity. Then Mrs. Drewitt told her nephew how fond she was getting of the country, and spoke enthusiastically of the view from Eversbeg Head; and pleased, almost in spite of himself, by her admiration for his native land, Maxwell began to wish they could be good friends—that no Kincorth stood between them.

"Tell me," she said, as they parted, "why you think I ought not to wish you back at Kincorth.

I can imagine that you might be a great comfort to me and a great help to your uncle."

"If I tell you, I am afraid you will be angry," he answered.

"Angry! you are jesting. What is the reason?"

For a moment Maxwell hesitated, then he said—

"Do you remember my saying once that I did not dislike you for yourself, but only for being my uncle's wife?"

"Perfectly; but I hope you do not dislike me now for that."

"No, not for that," was the slow reply; "not for that, exactly, but it is not in flesh and blood—at least it is not in my flesh and blood—to feel any great amount of attachment for a woman whose children will keep me out of Kincorth for ever."

She never answered him by a word. In the twilight he could see her turn first red and then white; he could see enough in her face to assure him his guess had been correct, and that there was an heir coming to inherit Kincorth, its woods, its lawns, its streamlets.

Never hence by the strength of his own right hand, by the power of his own work, by the force of his own industry, might the lands of his ancestors

return to him. The son of a younger son would possess Kincorth; while he, the son of the eldest son, was earning his bread in his barren farm by the desolate sea-shore.

As for Mrs. Drewitt, she re-entered Kincorth a different woman to that she had left its gates. She understood her position now. She knew at last why Maxwell and his two elder sisters detested her.

"Not for myself, but because of the sons I may have," she thought; and it seemed to her that everything which was strong and evil in her weak and tender nature sprung to life and prompted her to do battle for the sake of her still unborn child.

Had he measured her character accurately, would Maxwell have spoken to her as he did? I doubt it—doubt whether willingly he would have turned her friendship into enmity, and taught her to guard the inheritance of her children with a jealous watchfulness.

It was not for herself—it was for no benefit she ever expected to have out of the property that Mrs. Drewitt vowed Maxwell Drewitt should never own Kincorth—never if she had a living son.

Who can sow good grain as fast as the Evil One

can plant tares? who can learn to cleave to the right, even in twenty times the space which it takes him to adopt the wrong? In the garden of Eden the serpent speedily beguiled Eve into eating of the tree; but through all the centuries that have passed, with their sin and their sorrow, away since then, the Maker of the universe has never been able to induce his children to cast that evil and cursed fruit from them.

A moment for the one—thousands of years for the other. An instant sows the seed—the labour of a life-time will not eradicate the noxious plant the seed produces. We are strong for evil; we are weak for good. We are frail; we are erring. God have mercy upon us! for even the best man and the best woman proves, when put to the test, to be but a miserable sinner.

CHAPTER X.

MAXWELL'S ENGAGEMENTS.

AFTER leaving Mrs. Drewitt at the entrance to Kincorth, Maxwell slowly retraced his steps to Duranmore, thinking, thinking as he walked. He had never done thinking about his plans, his projects, his schemes, his hopes.

As a man strives to perfect an invention, as he meets every mechanical difficulty, as he seeks to understand what natural law is standing in the way of his success—so Maxwell Drewitt worked out the design of his own future painfully and laboriously.

It is one thing to sketch out a picture, and another to fill it in; one thing to draw a house, and another to build it; one thing to say I will do this

or that, and quite another to accomplish the project.

It is easy to plan; it is hard to finish. We can dream dreams, sitting in the fire-light or lying on the green hill's side, but if we would make those dreams realities, we must work hard and think hard; we must think till our brains are weary, we must work through the years for success.

The lives of all famous men repeat the same story, but the hearts of most young people reject it with impatient scorn.

They want the harvest and the seed-time to come together. It seems to them awful not to be able to gather till the autumn, to have to toil before they eat. Seeing the height to which others have climbed, they refuse to believe that the ascent can be so difficult. The successes which genius and labour have found it the most difficult to compass look to the eyes of inexperience easy and commonplace.

Can anything go more smoothly along the lines than engine and tender and carriages and trucks? Can anything be simpler, more natural, more prosaic than a railway train? and yet, oh! friends, how many a man's thoughts are concen-

trated there! how many a man's work has combined together to make up the sum total which you see!

It is thus with everything in life, be it small or be it great—the result seems to bear no proportion to the labour expended to produce it.

Time, thought, industry—we must give all these before, weary and worn, we can hope to reach the goal of such success as our souls desire. We must do what Maxwell Drewitt did—spare no pains, repine at no hardships, grumble at no obstacles on the road.

And yet there was one thing he lacked if he desired to compass such success as might not only give him competence and station, but happiness and content.

He was labouring for riches and position, but he forgot that, even in this world, riches and position, though much, are not everything. What are the daintiest viands, the choicest wines, to the man who can bring no appetite to table? What are lands and houses, what are fields and trees, if the eyes that look over them are dim with weeping, heavy with care?

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour

in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

"It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of carefulness."

I wonder how many young men believe these words to be true? I wonder how many, walking in the dim light through which all, rich or poor, must one day pass, would be able to say it was false?

The words which we listen to with careless ears at one time of our lives, thinking they were addressed solely to men who spent their strength for nought and disquieted themselves in vain thousands of years since, we come finally to understand hold a meaning within them which is and will be eternally true this year and next, and through all the years that are to come—true for the man who is toiling for fame, for the merchant who is heaping up wealth, for the woman who is labouring to secure a good position, as it was for Maxwell Drewitt walking though the gathering darkness by the shore of Duranmore Bay.

He was planning, plotting, scheming. He had youth, strength, hope, resolution. There was no reason why he should not have made a good thing of life, a good thing for himself and for others, save

this—that in the city of his heart he would not suffer that sentinel of the Lord—conscience—to keep watch; that he was selfish, unprincipled, unfeeling; that he did not care whether the car of his progress crushed men and women under his wheels; that he was over-confident in himself; that he believed, if we exhaust the matter completely, man to be stronger than his Maker—the creature, than the Creator.

I am not attempting to write a religious novel, I am not trying to interleave my book with sermons, but there is no author who can tell the story of a man's life truly, and not speak of the mistakes he made, of the errors he committed.

If it be but an extract out of the volume of existence that we profess to give—but the account of this one's love-making, of the disappointment of his friend—if we stop short when we find the record becoming troublesome to ourselves, or likely to prove displeasing to our readers, we may dispense with much minutiæ which is indispensable when we are tracing a human being's footsteps from the cradle to the grave.

When we take a man's life, and write his biography, indifferently it may be, but still as well

as we are able, we must tell where he went wrong, and how that wrong brought forth bitter fruit in the future. We must tell not only of the crimes of which the law of the land takes cognizance, but also of those other transgressions which are not punished with fine or imprisonment, but by the heavy hand of the Lord God himself. It is useless to try to tell a story and be bound to steer clear of this matter of eternal truth, of eternal justice. I might as well lay down my pen at once were the subject beyond a novelist's province; for the sum total of Maxwell Drewitt's mistake in life was, that he thought the will of man paramount—that—as many a reader will scoff over the few last pages—he scoffed at the idea of retribution, of repentance.

He built his house, but the Lord had no hand in it; he made his fortune, but the blessing of God was not upon it; he became a prosperous man, but the day came when he acknowledged with bitterness that prosperity is not always happiness.

In the spring-time of youth he reared his life's edifice on the sands; when the winter came—the winter with its storms, its rain, its snows, its frosts

—he saw the work of years scattered to the four winds of heaven.

It was just; but it was terrible. To me there is something too mournful for words to utter in the idea of that man walking on through the darkness—planning, plotting, scheming—for the end that I shall yet have to tell. Strong to work, willing to labour, independent enough to achieve, he had yet the seeds of ultimate failure in him —he was walking on blindly to meet his doom.

As he walked along, with the wind raising the hair from his forehead, he was thinking—how Kincorth should yet be his—how the day would come when his homeward steps would lead him thither, and not away from its gates; and he was thinking of something else, too—of something he was going to meet that very night—of a girl he had tried to make love him, and not without success.

He passed Ryan's cottage slowly, passed it and stopped to listen; then he leaped over the ditch that divided the lawyer's little meadow from the road, and made his way round to the place where his friend's hay was stacked. A stream went brawling by to the sea, and beside the stream

Jenny Bourke was waiting for him—poor little girl! poor foolish child!

From the hour Ryan warned Maxwell Drewitt off this ground, Maxwell vowed to win her heart. He did not know then whether she were pretty or ugly, sweet or sour, able to take care of herself or guileless as an infant; but it was all one to Maxwell. He would pay Ryan out, let his sister be what she pleased. He knew he was handsome; he knew he was a favourite with women; he knew he could soon make the girl fond of him. When he saw her he discovered something more —that the girl made him care for her. He had not quite contemplated this possibility, and it complicated matters a little; but the fact was so, nevertheless.

The only woman Maxwell Drewitt ever loved was Jenny Bourke; and the reason that he loved her was probably because she was so diametrically opposite to himself.

When he lay a-dying he thought of her; and thought then, what I believe to be true, that a prettier creature than Jenny Bourke never walked on the face of God's earth—pretty and soft and gentle; and faithful to him, at any rate. Oh!

sweet Jenny Bourke! why did you ever go out to meet such a man? why did you disobey your brother's commands? why did you lay your lovely face on his breast, and say that it was long since you had seen him—long that he had kept away?

Fair, sweet Jenny! there was never a rose in the kingdom lovelier, never a lily purer, when Maxwell Drewitt first cast his dark eyes upon you. Let me try to sketch the face he saw—the saucy piquante face that, in the time of his tribulation, in the time of his wealth, in the hour of death, was still framed in his memory.

Would she appear before him in the day of judgment, I wonder? Maxwell Drewitt said not. He said, as solemnly as he said he believed he was dying, that Jenny Bourke would be true to him in the next world as she had been in this, and that she would never turn informer.

Dark-brown hair; clear white and red complexion; large eyes, that now seemed brown, now grey, now black—eyes that varied with the light, with her thoughts, with her feelings, with her words; lips that were as red as cherries; teeth white and even, but not too small; a somewhat short nose;—these were the features;

but then it was not her features, it was the expression of her face; so joyous, so innocent, so pure!

I do not know how a man could ever make such a woman cry and forget seeing her tears. I cannot imagine how Maxwell Drewitt, fair and false, and hypocritical and remorseless though he was, could ever take such a girl to his heart and teach her to nestle there, knowing all the time he never intended to marry her; that the hour must come when he would have to cast her out from her abiding-place.

"I thought you never were coming," she said, with her sweet Irish voice, soft and low and plaintive as music over the waters—as the low wind sighing among the trees. "I thought you had forgotten me—that I never was to see you again—that——"

He stopped her words with kisses; but she laughingly released herself, and went on.

"That you were caring more for the grand ladies you are so intimate with than for me."

"As if any one of them could compare with you," he answered; "as if there were any creature on earth equal to you. How many hundred times am I to tell you that I love you, and you

only; that you are dearer to me than life or station or anything else in the world? But you say these things to try my temper," he added; "you say them to make me contradict you—to make me punish you," and he kissed brow and cheeks and lips till Jenny's face was as red as a rose; till she was glad that the darkness hid her blushes from his admiring gaze.

"I cannot come out to meet you again," she said at length, timidly and hesitatingly.

"Nonsense, Jenny; there is no such word as cannot in the whole of love's dictionary."

"Well, will not then, if you like that better," she answered, more firmly. "Indeed, indeed," went on the girl, "I cannot deceive Timothy any longer; I am getting that I am afraid to look him straight in the face; that I dread every sentence he speaks; that I am frightened of every question he puts. Let us part," and as she made this terrible suggestion Jenny began to sob. "Let us part if you cannot have me tell Timothy; if you will not speak to him yourself."

"The first day I ever saw you, Jenny, what did your brother say to you after I left the house?" But Jenny remained mute.

"Did he not tell you, to keep out of my way; to give me no encouragement; to show me no favour? Did not he tell you that, although I might be a fit acquaintance for him, I was none for you? that I was a bad man; a bad nephew; a bad brother; a bad friend? Did he not give me the worst character you ever heard given to an unfortunate fellow out of favour with fortune? Did not he do all this? I know he did, Jenny; I know it as well as if I had been sitting in the parlour listening to him."

"Maybe you were near it," suggested Jenny.

"No, I was not; but he spoke those words, or something very like those words, to me before you ever came to Duranmore. He said, 'I had rather put the child in her grave than give her to you.' That was his summing up. I hear it tingling in my ears yet."

"I wonder you ever looked near me after that!" remarked Jenny.

"Ah, Jenny!" said Maxwell Drewitt, "who could ever see you and not look after you?" and the young man stole his arm round her waist, and drew her nearer to him—nearer still.

"But if he knew the way things were now,

don't you think he might change his mind?" she coaxed. "If he thought that you—that I——"

"If he thought you loved me, is that it, Jenny?" he finished. "No, that would make no difference; it would only make him bitterer. I am a poor man you see, dear; and a poor man is always a bad man: you must take patience and wait a while. When I am able to drive here in my carriage and ask him to give me his sister, he will then perhaps beg me to step inside; but till then I must see you as I have seen you, on the quiet."

"I cannot go on with it," she said. "It is not right; and I have heard that good can never come out of evil."

"If it be wrong," he answered, "let the punishment fall on me."

"But oh!" said the girl, "we must each bear the burden of our own faults."

"When we come to faults, it will be time enough to discuss that question," he impatiently retorted.

"It is wrong, though," she persisted.

"If you think it wrong then you do not love me," he said. "You are not willing to suffer anything for my sake; you are ready to desert

me because I am poor and in difficulties. Had I been still at Kincorth I should not have been forced to beg so hard for so small a favour; but let us part, Miss Bourke, as you wish all to be at an end between us. I cannot force you against your will. Give me one kiss, Jenny, and bid me good-bye. I am used to being scurvily treated. I will go back to my wretched home, and forswear love for ever. One more—forgive me, it is the last time. Now, good-bye. Let me go."

But Jenny would not let him go; she hung about him, she sobbed, she asked forgiveness, she told him how she should die if he left her in anger, left her in grief.

He knew her every mood, her every thought almost, and he could manage her as easily as he might a child. She had her little qualms of conscience every now and then about her brother; she had her little fits of strength when she made all kinds of resolutions and declared her intention of keeping to them; she had her instincts too, which perhaps warned her that in concealment there is mostly danger—that though stolen waters may be sweet they are generally unwholesome; she had her hours of sadness, her times of bitter self-

reproach;—but Maxwell had long known how to deal with her in every mood: he was her master and she his slave; and the end of all such conversations invariably was that Jenny promised to be guided by her lover's advice; to do what he told her; to meet him when he asked her; to keep the fact of their engagement secret.

He called it an engagement, but whether he wilfully deceived her or resolutely blinded himself it would be hard to say: Jenny Bourke implicitly believed that he would marry her whenever he had enough money to do so, and her only trouble was lest her brother should withhold his consent.

As for Maxwell's intentions! He was very fond of Jenny, and that is all he ever told even to himself.

He was very fond of the girl: all the worse for her. That love was the whole of her life: it was then but a part, a small part, of his. He had other aims, other objects, other wishes. He had plans into which she never entered, projects of which she formed no part: there were whole days when he never thought of her, or at least never thought save casually. There was not an hour, there was not a minute, when Jenny did not think of him.

When they parted after a few such stolen minutes as those I have spoken of, he could put her out of his memory, he could thrust her out of his head, he could forget the sweet face, the pleading voice, the twining arms, the clinging manner, and turn him to his plots and his schemes again; nay, he could do more—he could part with the sister and go to meet the brother; he could make an appointment with Ryan likely to keep him out of the way while he talked to Jenny, and then he would tell some lie to account for being late, and be as mild and gentle as a south wind during their interview.

There are not many men in the world, more particularly not many of Maxwell's age, with consciences so elastic as to permit such stretches as these. It is not usual even for Christians to seethe the kid in its mother's milk, and I fancy there are few who would like to think that they had offered a man hospitality to the end that they might clandestinely make love to his sister. Human nature, though not at all times over-nice or over-particular, will turn squeamish occasionally about trifles; and if Maxwell Drewitt had been at all like other people it must have cut him a little to think,

after he left Jenny, that her brother was waiting for him at Headlands Cottage, wondering where the deuce Maxwell could have got to.

"Had to see madam home," was that young gentleman's explanation. "I think I must be a devilishly nice sort of fellow when ladies take to visiting me in an elegant mansion like this," and Maxwell threw himself into one of the two chairs his ménage boasted, and after expressing a hope that Ryan had seen to the kettle, began to rattle on about Mrs. Drewitt's visit, about her pressing invitation to Kincorth.

"I suppose you will soon go back to the old place now, then," suggested Mr. Timothy Ryan; "you must be pretty well tired of this," and the lawyer glanced contemptuously round the cabin.

"I would thank you not to sneer at my house," answered Maxwell; "I hope to have a better some day, but it is the best I have at present."

"Just so," argued Ryan; "and as I was saying, you must be pretty well tired of it."

"You should think! well, you are not me, that is the whole thing."

"But are you not tired?" asked Ryan.

"No; I have not even thought of being tired yet. Time enough for that when I see a better place to go to; time enough for that when I have made my fortune!"

"And how the devil," asked Mr. Timothy Ryan, "do you propose making your fortune here?"

"I mean to set up a private still," answered Maxwell; "I mean to turn alchemist; I intend to discover the philosopher's stone."

"You have your work cut out then," was the reply.

"I mean to make the howling wilderness a smiling plain," went on Maxwell, unheeding the interruption; "I mean to see corn growing where corn has never grown before; I mean to live in advance of my age and to make money in Connemara."

"You won't make much," said Ryan, by way of encouragement.

"That depends," answered Maxwell: "meanwhile, the certainty before us is punch. Let us drink that and be happy," and he pushed the whiskey-bottle over to Ryan, with the remark that the contents had never paid the King a halfpenny.

"It is all the better for that," remarked

Ryan; "but, not to seem personal, here's 'Long life to him.'"

"Amen," said Maxwell Drewitt, and the two men took a pull at the punch together.

"And here's to 'Ireland: long life to her,'" observed the lawyer.

"Amen," repeated Maxwell, and the pair emptied their glasses.

"Don't spare the potheen," urged Maxwell; "don't make the creature so weak that it won't be able to get into your mouth. Remember the good old Irish receipt for making punch: first the sugar, then the whiskey, and then every drop of water after that spoils it."

"So it may, but I have to get home to-night," remarked Ryan.

"The more reason you should recruit your strength for the walk," observed Mr. Drewitt.

"So you won't go back to Kincorth," said Ryan, after a pause devoted to whiskey and water.

"No; I am better off here. I have food and shelter in this cabin—as I suppose you would call it. At Kincorth, excepting a horse, I had nothing but the run of my teeth. I had no chance of making money; I had no feeling of independence.

In Headlands Cottage, on the contrary, 'I am monarch of all I survey, and my right there is none to dispute.' I have land; I have a house; I have bog beyond Eversbeg, I have sea-wreck on the shore. I have a future; I have hope; I see my way. I mean yet to be a rich man. When you, Mr. Timothy Ryan, my worthy creditor, are blacking your fingers over deeds of settlement and iniquitous wills, I, at present your humble debtor, will be a great man; able to make your heart glad by appointing you agent to my estates. Mix again, man. We shall have many a talk in years to come about this old cottage, about these winter nights."

And Maxwell laughed, and the turf-fire—the bright upheaped turf-fire shone on his dark face; and Mr. Ryan, looking around the room, wondered what made the young man so merry; what he could see in his prospects or his surroundings to inspire him with such hopes.

"I confess," he said, at length, "that I do not see how you are to do it."

"My friend," answered Mr. Maxwell Drewitt, "do you know anything of the science of agriculture?"

"No further than that it reluctantly pays rent," was the reply.

"Do you know anything of the rotation of crops?"

"I have not the faintest idea what you are talking about," answered the lawyer.

"Do you know anything of the nature of soils?" persisted his host.

"No more than I know of Arabic," was the reply.

"Have you ever thought much about manures?"

"Damn it, I am not a farmer."

"Well, I am; and I have thought about manures; I have studied the nature of soils; I can tell you all about the rotation of crops; and I mean to make money. I mean to turn up these grass lands, that grow nothing but moss and rushes. I mean to manure them; I mean to crop them. Harder than ever you read to be a lawyer, I have been reading to be a farmer. Pryor has been very good; he has sent me over books about soils. Turner is a trump; he has introduced me to an eminent English agriculturist with whom I correspond. I have ploughed and sowed half my farm

already; I shall get the remainder ploughed, so that the frost, if any frost come, may eat into the ground. I have collected sea-weed. I intend to keep stock after this year. The great mistake in Ireland is the neglect of stall-feeding. I mean to try it. If you exhaust the secret of England's prosperity, it is beer, beef, and manure; and I think I ought, as a simple matter of justice, to have put manure first. Let us see what sea-weed and stall-feeding will do in Connemara — what perseverance and resolution can effect anywhere."

"I hope I shall not see you ruined," was the reply.

"A beggar cannot be ruined," said Maxwell, calmly; and the conversation reverted to general subjects, till Mr. Ryan rose to take his leave, when Maxwell lighted him to the door and out into the night with a dip candle.

"Wishing it was wax for your sake," he said, with a laugh; and then he went back to his sitting-room, and remained there reading and writing and thinking for a couple of hours.

Next day he paid his promised visit to Kincorth.

"You will stay for dinner?" said Mrs. Drewitt,

whose manner was, as Maxwell noticed, colder than usual.

"Do, Maxwell," urged Kathleen.

"Of course he will," chimed in Mr. Drewitt.

"Thank you," said Maxwell, "but I am engaged—that is, I have an engagement."

"You have always engagements now," pouted his sister.

"Shows what a great man I am," answered her brother, as he left to keep another appointment with Jenny Bourke — pretty, trustful, foolish Jenny!

CHAPTER XI.

WARNED.

In the days of which I am writing there were two kinds of lawyer extant in Ireland—the wholly disreputable and the eminently respectable.

Among the disreputable every kind and description of man might be found, providing he was decidedly clever and not over-scrupulous; the respectable, on the contrary, were mostly of one pattern, men of standing, having characters to lose, who were socially quite on an equality with their clients, and who were as far above the stock attorney of Irish novelists as an honest merchant is above a swindling adventurer.

The worst of the respectable lawyers was that they were a little slow; the best of the disrepu-

table lot was that they were decidedly sharp and shrewd.

Drawn as a rule from the lower middle class, the latter had all the quickness of the lower orders of Irish society, all their acuteness of perception, all their rapidity of jumping to conclusions. In guerilla warfare the regular army had no chance with them; they were down on a point of law like a terrier on a rat; they had every Act of Parliament at their fingers' ends; they were perfect scourges in court; they were the terror of witnesses, the detestation of magistrates. If there were a flaw in your title, woe betide you if one of them got scent of it. They were clever, well up in law, impertinent, impudent, vulgar; they were always talking about the people's rights; always for the man who had shot his landlord or his landlord's bailiff from behind a hedge; always against the Crown; always in favour of the Roman Catholics and against the Protestants.

Unless a landlord had very dirty work indeed on hand he seldom left his family solicitor to seek advice from one of these gentlemen; and it was rarely indeed that any of them so far de-

serted his original flag as to serve under the enemy. In politics they were Liberals; in religion much the same. As a rule, they had been articled without the regular fee, and came into the profession by the back stairs. They were the hope of the vagabond population; they were the deliverers of many a man from the grievous terrors of the law; they fought so long as there was a rag of a chance left to them. If ever they got very rich they settled into men who upheld the constitution and the government; but so long as they remained poor—and that was generally for ever, because they spent as recklessly as they earned easily—they were for the people: for the women who went about barefooted; for the men who lounged through life with their coat-tails trailing the ground, with their battered hats worn on one side, with their hands in their pockets, and short pipes in their mouths.

Of this class Timothy Ryan was a favourable specimen. He might not have much principle, but he had a heart. He was known to forgive men their costs, though he was also known to have done many a thing which his best friends could scarcely consider honest. He was not a hard

agent, though he was certainly not an honest man. His conscience had never stood in his way, but his feelings had. He was immensely popular with the lower orders, but he had not the entrée into any of the gentlemen's houses in the neighbourhood, except into that of Waller of Eversbeg, whose agent he was, and to whose table he was often invited.

For the rest, he had little society save Mr. Murphy, Dr. Sheen's assistant; the parish priest, and a retired sea captain who lived on the Duranmore side of Eversbeg Head. With Maxwell Drewitt, whom he had known for years, his intimacy was entirely of a business character, and yet Ryan was proud of the acquaintanceship, such as it was. He felt it gave him a certain standing knowing a Drewitt of Kincorth, even although that Drewitt had not the remotest chance of ever owning Kincorth. He knew he owed Waller's agency—a tremendous lift for him—to Maxwell having brought the owner of Eversbeg into Inchnagawn Cottage to shelter during a storm; he was well aware young Drewitt could benefit him still more if he chose; for all of which reasons, Ryan cultivated Maxwell; whilst, for various

sufficient reasons of his own, Maxwell cultivated Ryan.

Jenny Bourke was Ryan's half-sister. They were children of the same mother; Mrs. Ryan having changed her name for that of Bourke within two years of her first husband's death.

Of the Ryans' union there had been many sons: one, Timothy, the eldest, settled at Duranmore as a lawyer; another ran away to sea; a third enlisted; a fourth emigrated; and so at last poor Mrs. Bourke departed this life in despair of ever seeing them reunited, and left her only daughter to the care of her sister and to the guardianship of Timothy.

As for Mr. Bourke, he had long before deserted his wife and married a younger and more attractive-looking woman in England; indeed, rumour said that Mrs. Ryan was by no means his first essay in matrimony. He had a way of winning widows and securing their little fortunes, and then disappearing like a flash of lightning.

Some people declared Bourke was not his name at all; but be this as it may, Jenny had never been called by any other, and she never hoped to be called by any other, unless indeed it might some

day happen that Maxwell were able to make her his wife.

Mr. Murphy had something more than a liking for the girl, but Jenny turned her coldest shoulder on the assistant when he called.

"It's that blackguard Maxwell at his tricks again," thought Mr. Murphy; "I am sure he sees her somehow:" but Mr. Murphy was a wise man and kept his own counsel. He did not frighten Jenny by spreading a net in her sight, but he drew back and watched who threw the crumbs, he felt confident, the girl came down to pick up.

"I've my eye on you, my boy," he would remark to himself when he met young Mr. Drewitt and exchanged bows with him; "I have my eye on you. Give you rope enough and you will run it into a noose for yourself, or I am greatly mistaken. Good-morning, sir; fine weather this for the country." And he would ride off on his rough pony, while Maxwell trudged over the Connemara roads on foot.

His uncle had offered him leave to take a couple of horses out of the stable at Kincorth, but Maxwell declined the gift.

"Not one of them shall give me a lift up," he

said to Ryan, and Ryan applauded his spirit even while he wondered at it.

"Where the deuce does he get the money from?" considered the lawyer: "where can he get it? for a man is not able to live for nothing, even in a cabin; and he pays wages, and buys implements, and hires horses, and draws sea-weed. I should like to know who is backing him. Can it be Turner? It is not impossible."

And Maxwell took every pains to foster this idea, and to make Mr. Ryan think not only that Turner was backing him, but also that Mr. Waller and Mr. Pryor were willing to help him in his endeavours.

In reality, however, he did not for many a long day receive the slightest assistance from any of his male acquaintances, whether Irish or English.

It was Lady Emmeline Vervensoe who helped him into the saddle; it was Lady Emmeline who, when she heard he had left Kincorth with the intention of trying to push his way on in the world, gave him a considerable sum of money, saying significantly as she pressed it into his hand: "Secret service money for the election; you need

not give me any account of it, Mr. Drewitt." And Mr. Drewitt did not give her any account, and when he found that his farming operations required more capital he asked her ladyship to make him a further advance.

He and Colonel Vervensoe had never healed up their old wound. So they passed each other when they met without speaking, and Maxwell was never by any chance now asked up to Cragantlet, even in the hunting season.

But yet the servants at Cragantlet knew that Mr. Drewitt of "The Headlands," as he was beginning to call his new property, occasionally rode up to the house when Colonel Vervensoe was from home; and a man who was in the habit of attending Lady Emmeline when she drove in her phaeton, or rode out on horseback, could have told tales of many a meeting, not accidental, between the pair.

There was nothing wrong in the affair; there was no breaking of the seventh commandment, nor idea of breaking it; but still Lady Emmeline liked Maxwell so much, and Maxwell found her ladyship so extremely useful, that neither thought of discontinuing the acquaintance altogether.

To be strictly truthful, however, the young man had thought at one time of persuading her ladyship to go off with him—not because being his neighbour's wife made her seem any nicer in his eyes, but simply because her husband had insulted him, and she had a large fortune.

I am afraid, seeing Lady Emmeline was not over-prudent, had Maxwell been sure the game was worth the candle, that he would not have proved over-scrupulous in the matter; but as it was, Maxwell had a long head, and a clear head, and he reflected that, if he ran away with Colonel Vervensoe's wife, that gallant officer would either shoot him or ruin him.

Her ladyship, at a certain price, might not be dear; but her ladyship, with a bullet in some part of his body, or with heavy damages from the Ecclesiastical Courts, was quite another matter.

Mr. Maxwell Drewitt thought that game not worth the candle, and so abandoned it, and accordingly Lady Emmeline Vervensoe's character was as safe in his keeping as though she had been as ugly as one of the witches in Macbeth or as repulsive as Sycorax.

Nevertheless, it was her money that ploughed his

fields, paid his labourers, bought his seed; and, to do Maxwell Drewitt justice, no money was ever more judiciously laid out.

He was prudent, he was economical, he did not encroach on her kindness; he knew when to hold back his hand and say, "enough."

He required money and she lent it to him—gave it to him, she said; but Maxwell preferred the other way of putting it. Once he had got the start, however, he worked manfully to keep it: he wanted to show Lady Emmeline, and to convince himself, out of what small beginnings even an Irishman may make a fortune; and so he laboured on, bringing first one piece of land and then another under cultivation, till people finally began to talk of Maxwell Drewitt as a wonder, and to marvel how he did it; while pretty Jenny Bourke thought within herself, "He will soon be rich enough to ask Timothy for me now;" but she never ventured to say this to him again, although she still stole out to meet him, either by the stream, or on the shore, or up in the mountain gorge that lay at the back of Inchnagawn Cottage.

"That is a mighty nice walk on a summer's evening," remarked Mr. Murphy, pointing up this

gorge, as he and Mr. Ryan stood looking inland one fine morning in June.

"Is it?" said the attorney, carelessly.

"I like to listen to your innocent talk," replied Mr. Murphy. "'Is it?' he says, just as simple as a lamb."

"Well, is it?" repeated Mr. Ryan. "How should I know anything about the place; I never was up the stream in my life?"

"Never were out with any young woman either, I suppose?"

"I have not been this many a year, at any rate," returned the other. "The only girl I ever was to say sweet on was not sweet on me; and somehow I never fancied another since."

"Well, it is mighty queer," remarked Mr. Murphy.

"What is queer?" asked his friend.

"Why, the lies men will tell when women and money are concerned. It was no later ago than last night that I followed a pair of lovers from the top of the gorge down to that big rock; you see it there, don't you?"

"Yes. You followed them; what then?"

"Why then, Mr. Timothy Ryan, as I did not

want to be seen, I stopped behind that lump of granite and watched; and I saw them in the darkness come down, down, down. The young woman wore a light dress; and I am positive that dress, at any rate, went round your haystacks and in by the back gate."

"You did not think it was me, Murphy?" said Ryan; but his voice sounded hoarse as he asked the question.

"You in the light dress? in course not; but if the man wasn't you, who was he?"

"You are sure you had not been drinking?"

"I'll swear it for you, if you like."

"And you are certain you were not mistaken?"

"Sure and certain."

"The man was not as tall as I am?"

"He might not have been."

"Was he anything like Maxwell Drewitt?" inquired Ryan.

"They could have passed for twins," replied Mr. Murphy.

"That's enough, Murphy, thank you," said Ryan, and he drew a long, deep breath. "It's warm to-day," he observed, lifting his hat off his head, and letting the light wind fan his temples.

"I must be getting towards Duranmore now," he added abruptly; "are you going to walk that way?"

"I can walk any way," was the reply. "Trade is mighty dull just now. There has not been a child born this week, I think; and only one accident, and he was carried home dead as a door-nail. It's a cursed place at the best of times," proceeded Mr. Murphy; "but the like of it this June nobody would credit. I have made up all our calomel into pills and powders, just for want of something to do; and I have been trying how much nux vomica I could take without bringing on tetanus, for the sake of whiling away the time. I don't think there is another such hole in the entire of Great Britain or Ireland. Whenever my mother dies, and she can't last long, poor old girl, I shall cut Ireland altogether, and make for London. That's the place, my boy—that's the chance for men like me."

And Mr. Murphy rattled on after this fashion all the way to Duranmore, leaving it quite optional with his companion whether he answered him or not.

Ryan elected not to answer him, and not to

speak till they were shaking hands at the door of his office in the High Street; then he said—

"They did not see you, did they?"

"Does a corpse see the sexton when he is shovelling the mould in on the top of him, do you think?" asked Mr. Murphy.

And with that they parted.

For many a night afterwards Mr. Ryan kept watch; many a time he pretended to go away from home, and kept guard in the gorge, in the twilight, in the starlight, in the moonlight—all in vain.

He would not speak to his sister nor to Maxwell. He bided his time, and he waited without result until one evening when he was returning, a day sooner than he had expected to be back, from an outlying portion of Mr. Waller's property, among the wildest part of the Joyce country.

There he had bought a new horse, a young, handsome creature, bay with black legs, leaving in exchange his old white mare and a not unreasonable number of pound-notes.

He was proud of his new purchase: it had a long easy trot, and had brought him by bridle-paths up hilly roads, through lonely valleys, thirty

Irish miles without turning a hair; and he was so careful of this good steed that he stopped at the top of the hill above Eversbeg in order to lead him down the steep descent.

With his arm passed through the bridle and his hand on the horse's glossy neck, Mr. Ryan paused at a turn of the road, and looked at the view spread out before him.

Nestling at the foot of the hill, huddled up among its woods, stood Eversbeg, and nearer to him still were the ruins of Eversbeg Abbey. He could see the pointed windows half concealed by ivy; he could see the grave-stones and the crosses and the monuments; he could see away over Eversbeg Bay, out to the great Atlantic; and he could discern, like a speck in the distance, Maxwell Drewitt's cottage lying away near Eversbeg Head.

There was a great hush and calm over everything—over the sea and the land, the mountains and the valleys—and Ryan could not help feeling subdued by that virtue of stillness, by that calm which seems oftentimes to follow the sun's setting, as though nature were lying quiet ere falling to sleep for the night.

After this pause he went on, descending the hill by a winding road, which soon shut out from his view Eversbeg and the Abbey and the Atlantic, but brought him at a sharp turn within sight of Kincorth and Duranmore and Duranmore Bay, which was more like a lake than like an arm of the sea, and his own white cottage close to the shore, where Jenny would not be expecting his return.

As he thought of this, Ryan pulled up short. He had twisted his hand in his horse's mane, he had lifted his left foot half way up to the stirrup, but on the instant he unwound his fingers from among the coarse black hair, and stood beside his steed, while the animal lifted up its head and looked out over the bay, too, as though he had been a Christian.

While he stood irresolute, Ryan saw a man leave the shore road, and, after looking round, follow the course of the stream I have spoken of as flowing at the back of Inchnagawn Cottage.

It was Maxwell Drewitt. Though it was getting dusk, though there was a considerable distance between them, still Mr. Ryan recognized the man he had been waiting for.

When there are not a dozen gentlemen within a circuit of twenty miles it is not easy to mistake the identity of any of them, and Ryan felt that he was not deceived—Maxwell Drewitt was going up the stream to meet Jenny, and he might catch them yet; and he would catch them, "he would, by ——."

He flung the reins to a lad who stood at a cabin-door by the wayside, and bidding him take care of the horse, Ryan left the main road and dashed down what remained of the hill, across bog and river, among brambles and heather, home. He had his riding-whip in his hand, and involuntarily he shortened his hold of it as he drew nearer—nearer still.

Every now and then he stopped, for there was a noise in his ears like the raging of distant waters. It was his passion—it was the tumult in his breast which sounded to him as the roar of the sea.

He came on—on; he gained the high road; he stole round by the back of his own house; and there, by the stream, were the pair still talking.

"Timothy!" shrieked Jenny—and she had reason: in a moment he held Maxwell by the collar, and showered down blows upon him.

"Villain! scoundrel! coward!" he said, and he literally ground his teeth with rage.

"Hands off, fool!" shouted Maxwell, and he clasped his own round Ryan's throat.

There was an awful struggle for a moment, but then Maxwell tripped his opponent up, and putting his knee on his chest, tore the whip out of his grasp, and sent it flying among the weeds and rushes that grew on the other side the stream.

"Who is villain, scoundrel, coward now?" he asked, with a sneer; with his face black with rage, with the veins in his forehead swelled, with the devil that was in him looking out of his eyes. "Who is a spy and a listener? I won't thrash you, because you are her brother; I won't shoot you, because you are not worth the trouble; but I'll leave you to think what you have made by this move;" and Maxwell released his adversary, picked up his hat, which had fallen to the ground, and saying to Miss Bourke, "I will see you another time, Jenny," was about to walk off, when Ryan called out, "Stop!"

"You shall never see her to speak to again. Only let me catch you near the house—only let me hear of Jenny ever looking to the side of the

street where you walk, and I will shoot you like a dog."

"Have you finished?" asked Maxwell; "because in that case I may wish you good-morning." And he lifted his hat to Jenny, whose face was as white as the cottage walls, and was gone.

Within a week Ryan took a house in Duranmore next door to his office, and moved his furniture and himself and his sister away from the pretty cottage by the shore.

But the waves came rolling up the bay for all that: though there was no human ear to listen to their music, they still rippled over the stones and sand—the shutters of the cottage-windows were closed and fastened, but the fuchsias bloomed the same as ever—no Jenny now stood by the stream, singing her love songs, dreaming her love fantasies, but the stream went dancing over the stones to the sea none the less joyously—there were none to look up at the everlasting hills, but the summer's sun shone on them, and the winter's snows lay on them, as the sun had shone and the snow had lain since the beginning of time.

CHAPTER XII

SON AND HEIR.

MEANWHILE there had been changes at Kincorth, such changes as the birth of a son and the management of a careful and educated woman were likely to produce; but the greatest change of all had perhaps been that wrought in Mrs. Drewitt herself, who, looking back twelve months, could not help marvelling if the Agnes Drewitt who sat nursing her child in her bedroom at Kincorth were the same with the new-made wife who had wept bitter tears in that self-same chamber, who had grieved over Maxwell, who had wanted to keep him in the house at any sacrifice, at any cost.

Since those early days, Mrs. Drewitt had grown very jealous for her son's inheritance, very watchful over the interests of her baby. Maxwell had

opened her eyes and taught her to discern between good and evil; and with all a woman's quickness of perception she had seen that there would be war between her children and the children of the elder brother; that Maxwell wanted the estate, and was resolved some day to have it.

"But he shan't, darling, shall he?" and Mrs. Drewitt kissed every one of her son's toes in succession as though he had been a pope.

There is no accounting for tastes, or otherwise one might wonder at the fancy mothers have for this form of refreshment. Pink and plump and pretty the creature's toes looked peeping from under the long white robe, but there was no earthly reason why she should have kissed them for all that.

She did perform the ceremony, nevertheless, rapturously, and then she lifted her eyes and looked out over the waving woods and the sunny fields that went sloping towards the sea.

It was a fair property. I have said what Maxwell thought of it as he stood gazing up at Kincorth on the summer's afternoon when you, dear reader, were introduced to him, and it was perhaps

natural that Mrs. Drewitt longed a little greedily to secure it for her boy.

Women nursing babies are all alike. They think nothing good enough for the new king, and they expect every created being to fall down and adore the autocrat as they do.

Women whose children are growing up get, as a rule, more sensible and fairer dealing year by year. They see their white crows throwing out black feathers; they begin to understand that other people have children too, and that the meadow-lands of existence cannot be kept clear so that their young lambs may browse over them undisturbed.

But a baby!—there is so much left to the imagination about a baby. It may grow up to be as handsome as Apollo, as wise as Solomon, as eloquent as Demosthenes, as just as Aristides, as holy as George Herbert.

It is so delightful to be able to sit in the sunlight, as Mrs. Drewitt was doing, nursing a two months' old monarch, and picture for him a reign long, glorious, and triumphant. If mothers did not mercifully forget these dreams, how could they ever live and face the downfall of all these airy

castles? How could they bear to see their sons and daughters grow up, not as the polished corners of the temple, but sometimes no better than other folks' sons and daughters—oftentimes much worse?

A baby!—a monarch, a pope, a little god, a lord mayor for a year and a day, and then another lord mayor rides in gilded coach to fortune, and inhabits his brother's grand chateaux en Espagne.

The king is dead, long live the king! and autocrat No. 2, No. 3, No. 4, as the case may be, appears on the daïs for the household generally to bow down before and worship.

A baby!—well, well, Maxwell Drewitt had been a baby once, and perhaps his mother dreamed such dreams for him as Mrs. Drewitt of Kincorth was doing for her baby now.

There are some things in nature which we shall never understand on this side eternity, and one of them, I think, is, why having a child born to her should make a woman unjust for the time being.

I know there will be an outcry of indignation at this assertion; but it is true for all that. Beyond her baby, a woman has at first no sympathy. Nay, I go further, and say she has no

liking save for those who serve, honour, and obey her Moloch.

There are men who are worse than women in this matter, but not many, thank God! If there were, the shop of the world might be shut up, and human nature would have to retire from business altogether.

Her baby!—there came a day when Mrs. Drewitt turned from her first allegiance and worshipped another baby. All her life long she was somewhat of an idolater, and her gods did nothing for her, as is the way with the gods we rear for ourselves—only brought trouble and sorrow to that gentle breast.

But sitting in the sunshine, kissing the fat toes of her first-born, Mrs. Drewitt was happy, and she was all the happier perhaps because she felt no sorrow for the man whom the birth of her son cut out from Kincorth for ever.

If we exhaust the matter, the young mother thought in her heart it ought to be a pleasure for Maxwell to stand out of the way of the new king's progress; and as she felt sure it was no pleasure to him to do anything of the kind, she began to entertain a very sincere dislike for her husband's nephew.

Holding her baby from her at arms' length—laughing when it laughed, clasping it to her heart, touching its little fingers, its little hands, its meaningless face, with a delight ever strange and ever new—something even in that happy moment came over Mrs. Drewitt that made the tears start into her eyes, and caused her face to change and sadden under the sunlight.

She was sorry that she did not feel sorry for Maxwell, that she did not like him, that she was not so glad to see him as formerly, that she could not care for Susan and Wilhelmina. She had resolved to do her duty, and this was the end of it. Human nature is stronger than duty, and it was impossible for Mrs. Drewitt to help her feelings. The child she had brought into this world was nearer to her than any other person's children could be.

It was natural she should long to secure Kincorth for the baby—that she should dislike any one who seemed to stand in antagonism to her son.

The child had changed her, and it was the consciousness of this change having taken place that made Mrs. Drewitt's eyes fill full of tears.

As for Mr. Drewitt, he had received the new arrival just as such a man usually does receive such donations—ecstatically!

To have heard him talk, any stranger might have thought that Mr. Drewitt only held the property in trust until his son should come of age. If his bailiff spoke to him about cutting down a tree, he hesitated. He would grant no lease for more than seven years.

The expenses must be curtailed, the household expenditure retrenched. His agent must see that the rents were paid more punctually. When Brian came of age it would not do for him to find the tenants all in arrear. He trusted those girls would marry, or that if they did not, Maxwell would have them to live with him. "I must try to make him an allowance for their maintenance till they all come of age, when I can perhaps manage to settle a certain sum on each," said Mr. Drewitt to his wife. "I should not like Brian to marry one of them, and if they grow up together who knows what might happen?"

Who indeed? but meantime the state of mind in which Mr. Drewitt went about the house, and walked round the shrubberies, and exchanged

greetings with his friends, and answered the congratulations of his acquaintances, was involved and ridiculous beyond description.

"It is a far cry to Loch Awe," Maxwell observed, drily, when Wilhelmina told him, with shrieks of laughter, how her uncle was doing everything with an eye to the pleasure and advancement of the young heir. "What kind of a creature is it?

"What kind of creatures are all babies?" inquired Miss Susan Drewitt, scornfully. "Though to be sure, to hear the way they go on about it, anybody might imagine it was not a baby at all, but an angel. Nannie says it is like its papa, and the doctor says it is like its mamma; but for my part, I think it is a cross between a star-fish and a lobster."

"You really ought to be in the house with uncle," remarked Wilhelmina. "He won't let a window be open for fear of the brat catching cold. He won't let any stranger touch it for fear the said stranger should have any dreadful and communicable disease. He was going to put Mr. Murphy out of the hall-door, the other day, because the poor man said, after uncle had quite worn him out, 'Tut, tut, tut, Mr. Drewitt, the egg is all very well,

but it is not worth the cackling you make over it.' I really thought I would have died, Maxwell. I had to put the whole of my pocket-handkerchief into my mouth, or I should have laughed outright.

"'Sir!' says my uncle, and he drew himself up like a grenadier.

"'You need not be offended, Mr. Drewitt,' says Murphy. I do love that man, it is so hard to put him out of countenance. 'A hen with only one chicken always makes ten times the fuss she would if she had a good clutch to go about with; and by the time you have a dozen, I'm thinking you won't be caring so much whether a few of them should catch some infection or not. Excuse a jest, sir, it is only my way. The baby is a fine baby. I don't know that ever I saw a handsomer.'

"And as he said that he looked over at me, and you know, Maxwell, what his looks are."

"He is an impudent scoundrel," remarked her brother. "If I hear of him looking at you at all, I will wring his neck for him—and glad of the excuse too," added Maxwell, *sotto voce.*

"You never saw a man make such an idiot of himself in your life," said Susan, laying a true Hibernian emphasis on the last word in her

sentence. "He ought to build a little chapel and have a shrine made, and let people only look at the brat from a distance. And that reminds me, Maxwell—do you know Kathie has never gone back to school yet? She is not well enough to go, Sheen says, and my uncle wanted her to keep away from the heir, seeming to think it might be something of consumption, and that the young gentleman would take it from her."

"And Kathie cried, till I told her she was a greater idiot than uncle and a bigger baby than the heir," put in Wilhelmina. "Mrs. Drewitt would not listen to such nonsense, though; she said Kathie should be with her and Brian if she liked. That is one thing I will say for Mrs. Drewitt—that she is good to Kathie. Give the devil his due, her own mother could not be better to her."

"But do you think Kathie ill, seriously ill, I mean?" asked Maxwell: if the young man had ever loved any of his own flesh and blood, it was Kathie, and he put the question anxiously.

"Well, you know she never was strong—she was always, as Nannie says, the 'crowl' among us," answered Wilhelmina, who looked both

strong and handsome, and had a rich colour in her cheeks with walking to Headlands Cottage; "she ought not to have gone to school, and it was not with Mrs. Drewitt's good will she went, but you and uncle would have it. You know it was your doing, Maxwell, and she got a cold, and the cold got worse, and you should see for yourself how she looks."

"What are they doing for her?" he inquired.

"Dr. Sheen has sent her some medicine, and Mrs. Drewitt tries to coax her to eat," Wilhelmina replied; while Susan added—

"I think they have an idea of sending her abroad. I am sure I heard some one talk of letting her spend the winter with the Dyaks, if money for her travelling expenses could be raised."

Then Maxwell Drewitt rose up, walked across the room, took a cigar out of a paper lying on the table, lit it, and began to smoke. When he had puffed away for a little time he said—

"Kathie shall not go to the Dyaks. I won't have my sister eating the bread of a dependent in the house of any of Mr. Drewitt's relations. If she needs a milder climate I will find somebody to take charge of her, and I will find the money too,

which the great people up at Kincorth seem to think a thing so devilishly hard to raise."

"That's right, Maxwell. Go it," exclaimed Wilhelmina, clapping her hands. "Send us all abroad, and come yourself—we'd make our fortunes at *rouge-et-noir*. Wouldn't it be capital sport?"

"You seem to think so, at any rate," remarked Susan, shortly.

"And you—ten thousand pardons. I forgot. You would not like to leave——"

"Whom?" asked Maxwell, as his sister stopped abruptly.

"The baby, I suppose," laughed Wilhelmina; whereupon Maxwell made some remark about the baby which did not sound like a blessing.

"What the deuce is their fancy for calling the young beggar Brian?" he inquired. "Is it Brian Boroïhme they have gone back to, or is it some of her people, or what?"

"There was a good Drewitt once," answered Wilhelmina; "at least, so tradition says, though I believe there is not a syllable of truth in the story. There was a good Drewitt once—good and wise, and his name was Brian. There is a long

rigmarole about him on some old stone in the abbey, and Nannie told Mr. Drewitt a great history about what grand people the Drewitts were in his day, and about what a pious man he was, and how he repaired the abbey, and how he planted that huge yew-tree in the churchyard, and that hollow ash, and that rotten beech on the lawn at Kincorth. And Nannie told her, too, how a child always strains after the person it is called after, and how luck follows names, and worked her up to such a pitch finally, that nothing would do her but the young gentleman must be called Brian—and accordingly Brian he is—Brian Archibald. It is not an easy name to make fun out of; so all I can do is to call him Brin Baldy. It's a pretty conceit, is not it? as Lady Emmeline would say, and it has the great advantage of being unintelligible. I have ventured to talk about Brin Baldy to Susan before uncle, and he had not the remotest idea of whom I was talking."

"I shall come up to see Kathie," said Maxwell, when his sister stopped—a little irrelevantly it is true, but still in consequence of some train of thought he had been pursuing during her sentence.

"I am sure *we* ought to be grateful," re-

marked Susan. "Get up and make a courtesy, Willy."

Which Willy accordingly did, observing, at the same time, she thought somebody ought to come and see Kathie, and rouse her up.

"Talk about peaches! You should have seen the peaches the Countess gave me the other day to take home to Kathie," she went on; "they were as big—oh! as big as Susan's head—four times as big as any I ever saw grow at Kincorth, and do you think she would touch them?—not a bit of it.

"'You little ungrateful wretch!' I said, 'and I have brought them all the way from Laddenwell home for you, and it was as much as I could do to keep from eating them on the road. You *shall* take them!'

"So she took one, and tried to swallow it, but she did not like peaches, she told me.

"'Will you have grapes, then?' I asked her, but she would not have grapes. At last I worried out of her what she could eat, and what do you think it was, Maxwell? I will give you six guesses."

"Don't be childish, Willy; go on."

"'Crabs!' exclaimed that young lady. "Now you

know crabs are things uncle can't bear the sight of, and that he thinks nobody else ought to be able to bear the sight of either; so I had to get one smuggled up for her. But when it came, would she touch it? I don't know what to do with Kathie," finished Wilhelmina, in despair.

"She ought to take a good canter every day of her life," said Susan, "and keep out of the nursery. There is nothing the matter with Kathie except the mopes."

"Do you know what your mother died of, Susan?" asked Maxwell, a little sternly.

"She died when Kathie was born. I suppose it was of that," answered Miss Drewitt.

"She would not have died of that if she had not been in a decline beforehand," said Maxwell; "and from what you say, I'm afraid it is consumption Kathie has got. I will come up and see her," he repeated. "I will walk back with you."

When Maxwell passed through Duranmore, on his way from Kincorth to Eversbeg, he stopped at Dr. Sheen's, and not finding that gentleman at home, spoke to Mr. Murphy about his sister's health.

"Had not you better step round when the doctor is within?" asked the assistant.

"I have got something else to do than dance up and down from Eversbeg here, after him or anybody else," answered Maxwell, with that graciousness of manner which distinguished his treatment of any one he considered beneath him in station.

"It is not my place to talk about Doctor Sheen's patients," persisted Mr. Murphy.

"What the devil is the use of your getting on in this way to me? She is my sister, and I must know, and I will know, what is the matter with her."

"And how should I know what is the matter with her?" demanded the other. "Sure we never know for certain what is wrong with man, woman, or child, unless we open them, and I suppose you don't want me to do that?"

"Will you tell me, as far as you do know, what ails my sister, or not? If you do not choose to do so, I must take her to somebody who will."

"I would rather you would ask Dr. Sheen. I am only his assistant, and I have not had his experience; and to be plain, the doctor and I don't

agree about the case. Ask him; or if you like, I will tell him to write to you."

"I want your opinion," persisted Maxwell. "All you say I shall consider as spoken to me confidentially, if you wish, only tell me exactly what you think is wrong with Kathleen."

"I do believe you are fond of her," said Mr. Murphy, with a vague wonder in his voice.

"What the deuce is it to you whether I am or not? Tell me your opinion, without beating about the bush any longer."

"Do you want me to tell you the truth or a lie?"

"I want the truth, whatever the truth may be," was the answer.

"Because," went on Mr. Murphy, "there's many a one says he wants to hear the truth, and then is angry at the man who tells it to him."

"Whatever you think, out with it," exclaimed Maxwell, impatiently.

"Your sister is very far from strong."

"I can see that without the help of any doctor's eyes," answered the young man; "but is she likely to get worse? Will the medicine she is taking cure her?"

"Doctor Sheen thinks it will," was the reply.

"But what do you think, Mr. Murphy?"

"I consider Miss Kathie to be in a very bad way," said the assistant.

"Will it be life or death?" asked Maxwell.

"Don't ask me. What is the use of it? Sure you know yourself."

For a minute there was silence—for a minute the thought of the only enemy that in youth a man like Maxwell Drewitt is afraid to face cowed him. Then he said:

"Would a warmer climate, Mr. Murphy ——"

"Save her, I suppose you mean. You can try it."

Slowly and reluctantly, Maxwell turned to go.

"One thing more, Mr. Murphy," he said. "Was the cold she caught at school the cause of this?"

"If she had not caught a cold there she would have caught it some place else," was the answer. "You can't keep a person shut up in a band-box for ever; and the fire was always ready laid in her, to be kindled some chilly winter's morning. But people invariably like to attribute disease to accident: they think if they could guard them-

selves against that they would be immortal," added Mr. Murphy.

Maxwell went out into the air. He walked home round by Eversbeg Head, from whence he had a view over the wide Atlantic, looking under the summer's sky like a glassy lake. He saw the ships going past with their white sails shining and glistening in the sun; he beheld the ocean at peace with man—the land kissed softly and gently by the waves; he saw his own fields looking rich and cultivated, in the warm glow of the afternoon light;—but there was a sorrow in his heart, the memory of which the peaceful scene could not chase away.

Many a feeling which passes through our breasts to-day we forget to-morrow; we fear, and with a new sunrise the dread is gone. We settle down to think: something comes to prevent our doing so, and the impression made, fades away and is forgotten.

Could Maxwell Drewitt have stereotyped in his memory all the feelings which saddened him when he stood, that day, looking out over the great Atlantic, I think—I believe—he would have gone through the rest of his life a better man.

But as it was, they were merely as words spoken to the air—as letters traced on the sand.

The next wind of passion bore them far beyond his reach and his recollection; the next wave of life, rushing up on the shore of his existence, obliterated their meaning.

Life and death, friends—life and death!—are these two not ever walking through this world hand in hand together?

The tide that brings a fresh soul into existence on its flow, bears a pale corpse out to the great sea as it ebbs.

There was a child born—there was a girl dying: there was a son and heir, over whose birth exulting parents rejoiced—there was an orphan waiting to rejoin her father and mother also.

There was life in the boy, who crowed and shrieked in the nursery: there was death in Kathleen, who walked about the grounds and through the rooms at Kincorth—who had learned her last lessons, who was never to go back to school any more—who was never to have lovers, never to be married—never to be anything except a slight, dark-eyed, loveable, delicate girl—who cooed and fondled the baby as long as she had strength to do

it, and who delighted in the new-comer, even although he did cut Maxwell out from the property.

"And Maxwell was always kinder to me than he was to anybody," sighed Kathie to Mrs. Drewitt; "I wish he was out of that cottage—I wish he was back at Kincorth!"

But when her wish was fulfilled, when Maxwell did return to Kincorth, I think it was best for Kathleen that she could not see him there—that she had then been sleeping for twenty years in Eversbeg Abbey, away from all the sinful jealousies and wicked passions which make the world so often seem only like a battle-field, where man stands up to war against man.

CHAPTER XIII.

MAXWELL'S IMPROVEMENTS.

THREE years passed away—slowly enough, for in a place like Duranmore time's flight is never very rapid; and during the course of those three years the novelty of having a son had worn off, and Mr. Drewitt cut down trees, and renewed leases, and took fines, and raised money without the slightest reference to his heir's interests. In the house matters were better managed; out-of-doors, worse. Every day the property was going more surely to the dogs; every day money seemed more difficult to be had, more impossible to be kept.

When Brian lay in his cradle, Mr. Drewitt proposed building a house on the farm he had settled on his wife before her marriage. "It will

increase the value of the place," he said; "and if I live till Brian grow up and marry, he can reside there and be independent of us altogether; while, on the other hand, should you, dearest, ever have to leave Kincorth, it would be a home for you."

All in vain Mrs. Drewitt remonstrated. All in vain she entreated him to wait, observing that it would surely be time enough to build a house for Brian's wife when Brian was put into jacket and trousers. She pointed out that money was not very plentiful; that workmen would have to be paid; that somebody must live in the house if it were finished; and that it would be a continual expense and worry.

Mr. Drewitt overbore all her objections. He insisted that the thing, being proper to be done, should be done at once; that a dower-house ought immediately to be erected; that the expense would be nothing, the advantages incalculable; and straightway he had granite quarried and drawn to the farm, chose a site, set labourers to dig at the foundations, and neglected every other concern of his life in order to ride over each day and see how the work progressed.

"Where are you drawing those stones to?"

Maxwell asked one of his uncle's men who was driving a cart and horse across the hills.

"To Analore, yer honour," was the answer.

"What for?" pursued the young man.

"To build a house for Masther Brian. The masther is greatly taken on with the notion entirely."

"Fools build houses," thought Maxwell, "and, my God, what a fool he is!"

Twelve months afterwards Maxwell rode over to Analore, and tying his horse to a gate walked leisurely up the hill to see how Brian's castle was getting on. Analore lay inland; it was, as Lady Ebbutt had said, a mountain: the farm was nothing more than a sheep-run. Nature had not made it a garden, and Art had left Nature's handiwork alone. Over the short grass Maxwell picked his way: there were boulders, there were brambles, there was bog, there was morass—Maxwell rounded them all, still keeping up the hill to the site Mr. Drewitt had chosen.

It was a winter's morning, bright, clear, and bracing; but there was nothing of elasticity in Maxwell's step—nothing youthful about his movements.

Every now and then he stopped and looked

about him; not that the place was unfamiliar, for the young man knew every rood of his uncle's property much better than his uncle did himself. He was scrutinising the land professionally; he surveyed it as a jockey might a horse. He was contrasting it with Headlands, and thinking he had made a mistake in choosing a farm by the sea. He dug up the turf with the heel of his shoe, and taking a piece of the earth in his hand examined it minutely.

"Curse him!" said Mr. Maxwell Drewitt as he threw the mould away, "this soil is better than mine," and he pursued his walk up the hill, thinking while he walked, till he reached the place where Mr. Drewitt had thought to build his house.

It was a lovely site. "A property in such a situation, within twenty miles of London, would be worth a king's ransom; the view alone would be a fortune," thought Maxwell, while he looked over lake and valley, over gorge and mountain, and then he laughed, to see nothing but the foundations built up, no sign of bricklayer or labourer at hand. There were cartloads of granite on the ground; there were heaps of sand and marks of where mortar had been mixed; there was the earth

that they dug out of the foundations wheeled away on one side, and in this state the edifice was left.

"If he had given this to me instead of settling it on her; if he had said, 'Maxwell, you have been hardly done by, and it is not much I can give you, but there is Analore, take it, for you and your heirs for ever;' if he had made it over by any binding legal document and helped me to raise a thousand pounds upon it, or lent me a thousand himself, as he might readily have done, I should not have cared to call the king my cousin," were the thoughts that chased one another through Maxwell Drewitt's mind. "I could have built a house of those boulders; I could have drained this land; I could have grown potatoes here till the ground was fit for oats; I could have made a fortune out of the place, and so might he, if he were not what he is—a purposeless idiot, a thickheaded ass."

All the world over, the man who has got hold of a new idea abuses the man who sticks to the old: in Ireland, as in England, the man of business hates the man of pleasure; the worker detests the idler.

Mr. Drewitt might be a fool, an ass, an idiot; in

some things, indeed, I am afraid he was all three; but had Maxwell been born to a great estate, he would scarcely have seen his uncle's shortcomings so clearly; he would not have looked so closely after soils himself.

Give a property to a man whose eyes have once been opened and he can see clearly enough how to improve it; but till necessity has sharpened their inventions, I think few people notice everything which is lying within their ken. It was his uncle's marriage that sharpened Maxwell Drewitt, that enabled him to see exactly to what extent the rent-roll of Kincorth might be increased.

"If it were clear to-morrow it would be worth fifteen thousand a year; increase those mortgages, and I could make it worth forty thousand a year." This was Maxwell's calculation as he sat on a great stone, looking over the lake, and the valley, and the distant mountains. "I must try to get some land in this neighbourhood, and so make the most of my rights of sea-weed," was the practical conclusion he arrived at ere he left Analore.

"A man like this deserved to succeed," I hear some say at this juncture; and my answer is, "He did succeed—he did lay house to house and acre

to acre." He gained all that he set out determined to achieve, and if he did not secure the great prize, towards which all human efforts aim—happiness—it was only because, thinking he should find it in wealth and position, in lands, in smiling fields, in verdant pastures, he strove to become the owner of these good things, and of these only.

Knowing what need Ireland has of such men, fresh from the sight of her wretched poverty, her miserable management, her forlorn condition, I could almost wish I had chosen a different hero, and taken a better man to show what energy and perseverance may do for an individual as well as for a people.

There are such in Connemara; there are little oases, formed by their industry and talent, in the wilderness; there are gardens in the desert; there are resting-places where the tired mind and the weary heart may sit down and take refreshment, seeing what even one man has been able to effect. Kincorth is one of these; but the mind that saw what Kincorth might be made has long ceased to fret itself with schemes, to vex itself over disappointment; while the man who owns Kincorth now is grave beyond all mortal comprehension.

Let me go on with my story, friends, for I must not write of the end yet.

All the plans of Mr. Drewitt's life came to nothing, like the dower-house at Analore. All the good he purposed died in the birth, all the reforms he intended were never carried out.

The road to ruin was the one he voluntarily chose in youth, and he always lacked strength of mind enough to turn back at any stage of his journey and try to make for fortune.

For a time Mrs. Drewitt endeavoured to mend matters, urging him to look his affairs boldly in the face, and not to allow them to get more and more involved; but before she had been married two years she, too, learned that speaking was useless, and contented herself with entreating that he would not mortgage the house and demesne of Kincorth; that he would endure any inconvenience, practise any economy, rather than jeopardize *the* inheritance of their son.

Mr. Drewitt promised, and then broke his promise, comforting himself exceedingly the while by thinking that his wife need never know he had done so.

Mortgaging in one class is very like pawning in

another. Money is wanted, and a few thousands can easily enough be raised. Money is needed, and it is only a step to the three balls.

But in either case it is the repayment that proves difficult, and with Mr. Drewitt repayment was simply impossible. Still on—on—along the road to ruin he pursued his way, riding his hacks, keeping his hunters, making guests welcome, running into debt recklessly as he travelled.

There was plenty of good company taking the same journey with the owner of Kincorth.

His was no isolated case—no exception to a general rule—only perhaps there were few who, while beggaring themselves, made so little show of wealth as he—few who seemed to do so small an amount of good, either to their families or to their friends, as this weak, amiable, purposeless, loveable Archibald Drewitt, who put down his misfortunes to every cause save the real one, who shifted the blame to any man's shoulders rather than carry it himself.

Much as she loved her husband, Mrs. Drewitt could not be blind to his shortcomings; she could not avoid seeing that different management might have produced different results.

She heard how well Maxwell was doing, and asked his uncle whether he could not reclaim some portion of his own land likewise.

"If I had started unencumbered as he has done," replied Mr. Drewitt, with a sigh, "things might have been very different; but I have been in debt from the first. I had a heavy establishment to keep up. I had those children to maintain."

And the owner of Kincorth spoke in a tone of such sincere self-pity that Mrs. Drewitt had no courage left to remind him of the fact of his having started with eight thousand a-year clear, spite of the mortgages. She held her peace, and Mr. Drewitt still continued traversing the road that for him could have but one end.

Three years passed away. Kathie was dead, Susan had eloped, Wilhelmina rode as fast, as far, and as fearlessly as ever. There was another child at Kincorth—a daughter named after its paternal grandmother, Geraldine. There was a third infant coming, and Mrs. Drewitt's face was beginning already to tell tales of sorrow and anxiety. Poor lady! four years of married life, of an irregular household, of a dissatisfied family, of regret, of sickness, of struggle, had rubbed some of

the beauty of youth off her countenance, had altered and saddened her expression.

She had mourned for Kathleen, she had wept over the girl in the watches of the night; she had kept her with her so long as human love and human care could avail; and when at length Kathleen floated out from the river to the sea, Mrs. Drewitt watched her as she drifted towards the great ocean with eyes dimmed by crying, with a heart bowed down by grief.

Though she had her baby, though she did now own that great and powerful king, still she missed the friendship and the companionship of the girl who had taken to her so kindly.

She had never feared to talk to Kathie about her perplexities, her difficulties, and now she knew that through the years to come she must live entirely without sympathy, and without assistance.

If anything had been wanting to fill her cup of sorrow at that time, a remark of Maxwell's, which through the officiousness of an acquaintance came to her ears, would have caused it to overflow.

He said what he knew to be false, that if Kathie had been properly attended to when she

first returned from school, she need not then be lying in Eversbeg Abbey.

It was not true; and Mrs. Drewitt herself chanced to be aware that no care or attention could have saved Kathie at any stage of her disease; but the blow went home for all that.

She reproached herself; she thought she had not noticed Kathie's malady so soon as she might; she remembered that she had mistaken the flush on her cheeks for strength—the brightness of her eyes for health.

She knew she had been taken up with herself and the baby; for a time she remembered she felt so ill that exertion of any kind was a trouble; and then she was so happy about the birth of her son, that she did not pay much attention to any one save the young autocrat.

She had put the boy first (this was what she thought), and, being her own, she ought to have seen to poor motherless Kathie, even before thinking of her child. Heaven help her!—many a time that winter the baby went a little to the wall, while the sick girl was nursed and tended.

If Maxwell had exhausted all his ingenuity in

trying to make her wretched, he could not have succeeded better.

She had been selfish, she had been absorbed, and it was wrong for her to be either, though nothing could have saved Kathie, though no help of man could have averted the decree of death.

She and Mr. Drewitt had both been foolish. She, gentle soul, could see it all clearly enough when the idol had been taken down from its pedestal, when its father ceased to consider its future prospects every moment in the day, when she found life had its duties, though she was a mother—when she discovered that even a baby may usurp too much attention, and lead with its fat toes, with its plump legs, with its soft, yielding body, with its clenched fists, with its meaningless face, its unseasonable grief, and its maniacal merriment, the wisest parent into temptation every day.

Poor Kathie! Mrs. Drewitt mourned for her as no one of her own flesh and blood sorrowed.

Maxwell was busy with his schemes; Susan was full of her lover; Willy thought the house dull, and lived as much out of it as possible; Mr. Drewitt had his own anxieties and troubles, and

besides, he said "he always expected Kathie to follow her mother."

Mrs. Drewitt alone, did not forget the girl, but thought of her when the winter snows were on the ground, when the February rains deluged the earth, when the spring flowers were blooming and the summer splendour glorifying the hills. Nothing could be quieter than Eversbeg Abbey, nothing more beautiful, more peaceful, and Kathie always longed for peace and quietness.

It was best so—it was best.

The birds built their nests in the ivy that grew over the window beneath which the vault of the Drewitts lay. They went twittering in and out, chirping and singing all the day, from early morning till late at night. The sheep came in over the broken wall, and browsed at will among the graves, undisturbed by resident or stranger. The ferns grew among the old walls, and the grass was long and rank in the hollows between the tombs. Nettles tall and luxuriant flourished where the priest had once performed mass, where the worshippers had once knelt before the altar.

There was no roof to the Abbey, save the sky. The once perfect arches of doors and windows

were falling to decay. The evening wind lightly stirred the leaves of the ivy. In the stillness the ripple of the waves upon the shore could be distinctly heard, and it was in this quiet nook—quiet and neglected, desolate and beautiful —that Kathie, with her hands folded on her breast, slept among her kindred, far beyond the reach of sorrow or regret.

One trouble drives away the memory of another, and Susan's elopement proved even a greater trial to Mrs. Drewitt then Kathie's death. She knew where the one was, but did not know what had become of the other. She only felt that the evil she was unable to avert had come at last. She had spoken to Susan, to Maxwell, to Mr. Drewitt, and behold the end was an empty room one morning, and a note from Miss Drewitt, stating that as anything seemed preferable to remaining at Kincorth, she had determined to cast her lot with the only man who loved her.

"What lot has she chosen, Maxwell, what lot?" asked poor Mrs. Drewitt, as with blanched face she showed this note to her nephew, and entreated him to trace his sister and bring her back.

"Would she stay, do you think?" asked Max-

well. "Could you or I, or anybody living, keep Susan here if she made up her mind to go away? But I will follow them to Dublin. I will see whether they are married, and if not, he shall marry her."

But the fugitives were gone to England, and at Liverpool Maxwell lost all traces of them. He could not devote his life to running after his sister. He had not the time, he had not the money, he had not the inclination.

"As Susan had sown she must reap," he remarked to Mrs. Drewitt, and he went back to his farm by the shore.

What more could be done for Susan was done by Mrs. Drewitt, who wrote to her brother-in-law, Sir Everard Ebbutt, begging him to ascertain Captain Ellenham's antecedents, and to give her tidings of her niece, if possible. Further, she asked him not to mention the matter to his wife.

Sir Everard lost no time in replying to this letter. To begin with, he stated that Captain Ellenham could not have married Miss Drewitt, because he had at that moment a wife and three children living in London. Further, Captain Ellenham's regiment having been ordered abroad,

it was more than probable Susan had gone abroad with him. Should he obtain any further information he would let her know.

"It is a blessing she has gone abroad. I hope she will die there!" was Maxwell's only remark when Mrs. Drewitt communicated these particulars to him. "And if ever I come across that fellow, I will shoot him. Meantime it will be as well to say to every one that they are married." Having summed up the duty of the family in which explicit sentence, Maxwell dropped the subject, and never, of his own free will, mentioned his sister afterwards.

He was building a house at the time on the piece of barren land that had come to him from his grandfather, and he paid particular attention to the masons during the whole of the summer following Kathie's death.

"A bare staring place," Mr. Drewitt told his wife, "that it made him feel cold even to look at. What a pity for him not to have chosen a better site! It is a good house too;" and then he asked Maxwell why he had not selected some finer position, somewhere on the side of a hill, and where there was more of a view.

"Beggars cannot afford to be choosers," answered the younger man; "besides, wait a while, sir, and you will not call my choice so bad a one. Further, remember the land I am laying money out on now is *my own*, and that I am not in a position to both build and buy."

"But money can always be raised, you know," suggested Mr. Drewitt.

"Can it?" was the reply. "That is not my opinion, and I hope you will never find reason to alter yours."

This little rap ended the conversation. It is not easy to talk with a man who has always the last word and the best word; and besides, it suddenly occurred to Mr. Drewitt that the house at Analore was not two feet above the ground, and that perhaps Maxwell might inquire why he did not raise money to finish it.

"He must be excessively clever, I think," sighed Mrs. Drewitt, when she heard in the following spring how Maxwell was buying young trees from Waller of Eversbeg, and planting them round his new abode.

"They won't live—they can't live; it is impossible," said Mr. Drewitt, who, although he did not

exactly grudge Maxwell his success, still thought that such innovations ought not to be encouraged by Providence. "They cannot live; consider the sea-breeze—the exposed situation."

And Mrs. Drewitt, of course, was of her husband's opinion. Maxwell had made a mistake at last; the trees could do no good. But the trees throve for all that. Maxwell had considered the matter before ever Mr. Drewitt thought of it. He had a south aspect; he was well sheltered from the north and east; he knew that the woods surrounding Eversbeg must have been planted by some one, and he thought he would risk something at any rate, and make the experiment.

There is many a lovely place across the water, many a sweet nook in the Green Isle, but I doubt whether in its way—which, of course, is not a grand way, but only very quiet and enchanting—the tourist could chance to see a prettier spot than "Headlands" at this day.

If you row across the bay from the little fishing village of Eversbeg, you see the house built of granite lying among the trees. The lawn slopes quite down to the edge of the shore, while the woods, spreading out like a semicircle, enclose this

piece of green, which is soft as velvet. Down almost to high-water mark the plantations extend, and when the tide is in the willow, and the birch, and the spruce-fir droop their branches over the tide. See it on a fine day, when the bay resembles an opal; when the new-mown grass appears in the distance to be an emerald set in a darker band of green; when the rugged headland shows dark and steep against the calm unruffled ocean; when there is hardly a ripple on the sea, when there is scarcely the lightest breeze stirring among the tree-tops; when the little fishing village nestling on the side of Eversbeg Point looks white and picturesque in the bright sunlight; when the mountains look higher and nearer than usual, and rear their great heads towards the sky; when the ruins of Eversbeg Abbey appear close at hand; when the fresh-shorn sheep are climbing the hill-sides; when no sound breaks the stillness save the plash of the oars as the rowers pull across the bay, and the drip drip of the water from the blades, as they hold them above the sea and float gently towards the shore;—see it thus, I say, and you can well fancy you have beheld fairyland. It is a place you cannot bear to leave—that you turn back and look at with an in-

describable emotion—that you wave your adieu to with the tears filling your eyes, though you could not give a reason why or wherefore.

Maxwell Drewitt found it a wilderness—this is the paradise he left it. Think of that as you lean over the stern, and the rowers bear you away from the garden of Eden, and think, also, if you had such a nest on earth you might find it hard to leave the world, and that, perhaps, it is best for you to own nothing so perfect, so exquisite of its kind.

Headlands is too beautiful—that is all any person can say. It seems too charming to be real; and when you have left Eversbeg behind you, and are travelling away towards Oughterard through the valley of desolation, through the land of a thousand Dead Sea lakes, you come gradually to believe that "Headlands" was a dream—that such a place never existed—that the lawn does not slope down to the glassy sea—that the trees do not overhang the water—that Maxwell Drewitt never planted the ground at all, but that it remains barren and sterile to this very day.

Nevertheless that modern garden of Eden lies in Connemara, on the shores of the wide Atlantic;

within sight of its tremendous billows, of its restless waves. Eversbeg Bay is much more open than Duranmore, which almost resembles a lake. On the north side of Duranmore stands Kincorth, well sheltered from all breezes save the south, high up on the hill, the house conspicuous for miles; on the north side of Eversbeg, lying low by the shore, is the modest mansion Maxwell reared for himself in the days when he was a poor and a struggling man.

The trees grew and spread out their branches, the land improved and began to pay him well.

While difficulties increased at Kincorth, everything grew smoother and easier at Headlands; and yet one difficulty had arisen in Maxwell Drewitt's path.

Colonel Vervensoe was dead; and Lady Emmeline, by consequence, was left a widow.

It took Maxwell a few days to realize the difference that this fact might make in his position; and then he drew back his breath and paused, asking himself, "What next?"

CHAPTER XIV.

NEXT.

If the fact of Lady Emmeline being Colonel Vervensoe's wife, and unattainable, had not enhanced her charms in Maxwell Drewitt's eyes, the fact of her being Colonel Vervensoe's widow, and available, rendered her less desirable still.

There had been a time, indeed, as previously mentioned, when the young man hesitated about running away with her, and settled not to do so; but then his future looked dark in the extreme—now it was bright and hopeful.

If only Colonel Vervensoe had remained at Cragantlet, as any other Christian would, instead of dying at such an unlucky crisis!

"It seems as if he had almost done it to spite me," muttered Maxwell; and the young man

cursed his neighbour for having departed this life at all.

In former days Lady Emmeline's loan to Maxwell had smoothed matters for him; but four years after that loan complicated his difficulties, and made him walk round and round Eversbeg Head, and round Eversbeg Bay, asking himself as he kicked the stones before him, What next—what next?

The financial crisis which troubled Maxwell was this:—

Suppose he did not marry Lady Emmeline—her ladyship would be certain to ask for repayment. He could not mortgage to repay, because his land was mortgaged to its full value already. Suppose he offered to marry her, and that they kept the engagement secret, and that he never fulfilled his promise?

Before he was well out of his difficulties, somebody else would marry Lady Emmeline—she was sure to leave Connemara, because the next heir would require possession of Cragantlet; and if she went to Dublin or London, how long was it probable she would remain a widow? Suppose he did marry her—he would

get fortune and position, but then he would also get a wife.

"That is the devil of it!" said Maxwell Drewitt, with that charming frankness which characterized all his mental conversations. "That is the devil of it!" and he hesitated and waited on, while Lady Emmeline grew kinder and kinder; and, free at last to follow the bent of her inclination, absolutely forced money on the man who could have sworn at her for ever having lent him any.

He had his own ideal of a wife, and Lady Emmeline did not come up to it. He had an ideal the reality of which was not unlike Jenny Bourke, if Jenny Bourke had been rich, and well-born, and accomplished.

It is not fair to contrast twenty and forty-four —the bloom of youth and the bloom of rouge—the charms of purity and innocence and the graces of fashion and affectation; but, on the other hand, poverty can bear no comparison with wealth, low birth with long pedigree.

He could not marry Jenny. Were he as rich as Crœsus, as great a man as the Duke of Leinster, Maxwell felt it would be impossible for him to marry Ryan's sister and remain in Connemara.

There are some things which to some men are impossible, and a low match was one of these to Maxwell Drewitt. No love, no beauty, no truth, no devotion could reconcile him to that.

Though he had lived in a cabin, though he would not have minded working like a common labourer to achieve an object, still Maxwell Drewitt was as proud as Lucifer; and for the blood of his wife, of the mother of his children, not to be of the regulation colour and quality, was a thing terrible to contemplate.

He could not marry Jenny Bourke—poor Jenny! And Maxwell Drewitt's dark eyes grew darker as he thought of the girl who loved him, who was staying single for his sake, who managed, spite of all her brother's precautions, sometimes to see him; who had got pale, poor child! pale and thin, because of that hope deferred which maketh the heart sick.

He could not marry Jenny, but he could marry Lady Emmeline; and he could have her Connemara property, which lay among the mountains beyond Cragantlet, and her money to improve his own properties.

He could buy, he could drain, he could till; in

imagination he saw corn waving where the sheep now browsed. He could be wealthy and independent; he could soon be almost as great a man as the Earl of Popingham. He could pay out everybody who had ever been insolent to him. He could take up the mortgages on his uncle's estates; he could make Headlands the wonder of Galway, the admiration of strangers, a place to be proud of himself. He could do all this if he married Lady Emmeline; but then, when he had done all, he should not be able to get rid of her: that was the devil of it, that was where the shoe pinched.

"But then," reflected Maxwell, "hang it! a man cannot have everything in life; and if he gets the best thing he must be content. Isn't it better to satisfy one's ambition than one's love? If we fulfil our ambition, the gratification remains; if we gratify our love, the pleasure is transient. Anyhow, I am not called upon to make a choice, because, though I do love Jenny, I still cannot marry her—could not if there were no Lady Emmeline in existence. Hang marriage! it is like going through life with a halter round one's neck. It is the most terrible 'must' in existence, because we

seem to have some choice in it, and have, as a rule, nobody but ourselves to blame if it turn out ill. All experience is against it—all proverbs are against it. 'Next after single a good wife's best;' but the single is better than the good wife. 'Better marry late or never.' I don't think that is true. I fancy it must be better to marry young or never. I wish I had not to decide; and yet, after all, many a man would consider himself a deuced lucky fellow to be standing in my shoes. Success has spoiled me. I would have married her four years ago and welcome. Oh! Jenny, I wish I had never seen you." And Maxwell Drewitt crossed his arms on the table, and leaning his head on them, thought this problem out—this wonderful problem of not loving a woman well enough to marry her, and yet of loving her so much that it made the idea of marrying another hateful to him.

He could not make up his mind; he grew restless, he became soured; he would ride halfway to Cragantlet, and then turn back again. He was so young to sell himself for money; but yet such a chance might never come in his way again. Lady Emmeline had been thought a catch for Colonel

Vervensoe. What would she be therefore for Maxwell Drewitt? It was folly, it was nonsense, it was midsummer madness; and the young man began to visit regularly at Cragantlet, which the courtesy of the next heir had left at Lady Emmeline's disposal for twelve months till she should form her future plans. Mr. Maxwell Drewitt had his own opinion about this next heir—a distant relative of the late proprietor—which was not favourable. He thought he wanted to marry Lady Emmeline himself, and perhaps so did the widow, for after a time she began playing off Dolf Vervensoe against Max Drewitt. Dolf often came down to see to the management of the estates, and people soon commenced talking (they talk and chatter in Connemara the same as in any country village), and saying that Lady Emmeline would not have to leave Cragantlet at all except to be married.

"She can go to Dublin and buy her trousseau, and get it all over there," laughed Mrs. Munks, a little bitterly, for Cragantlet was a fine property, and the Honourable Mrs. Munks had daughters.

"But surely," suggested Mrs. Drewitt, "she would not marry so soon after her husband's death?"

"He has been dead a year nearly," was the reply, "and I dare say Mr. Vervensoe would let her keep Cragantlet another for the sake of her fortune; besides, is there any person on earth who could say for certain what Lady Emmeline would or would not do? Louisa, my dear," went on Mrs. Munks, turning to her second daughter, "do you remember that funny Scotch song Miss Macpherson so amused us with the other evening? Talking of Lady Emmeline puts me in mind of it. Something about a widow; don't you recollect?"

"Oh, I know," exclaimed Miss Munks, holding up her riding-habit while she walked across the room, for as usual the mother and daughter had galloped over to Kincorth; "at least, I know the song you mean. I think I can repeat the last two verses, though of course it would be impossible for me to say the words anything like Miss Macpherson."

"Good gracious! Miss Macpherson! You should hear her talk, Mrs. Drewitt," exclaimed Mrs. Munks, who spoke with a fine brogue fresh as the day it was imported from the county of Cork.

Mrs. Drewitt vaguely wondered whether Miss

Macpherson's Scotch accent *could* be any worse than Mrs. Munks' Irish, while Miss Louisa began:

"'Tam withered like a sickly flower that frae its stalk does fa',
And in a twelvemonth after that puir Pate was ta'en awa';
And as I laid him in his kist and closed his glazèd e'e,
I wonder't if the yirth contained a lanelier thing than me.

"'Noo I'm a waefu' widow left, a' nicht I sich and grane,
And aften in my musin' moods when sitting here my lane,
There's ae thing I'll confess to you, 'bout whilk I'm sair perplext,
I aften wonder, Janet, noo, whose lassie I'll be next.'

"For my part," concluded Miss Louisa, "I wonder that while there are more women than men in the world, widows are allowed to marry at all —I do indeed."

"There was a time when I thought if Colonel Vervensoe died, another person would try for Lady Emmeline, and try successfully; but it appears I was mistaken," said Mrs. Munks.

"Who was that other person?" asked Mrs. Drewitt, being naturally curious on the subject, for where there are few neighbours, even the quietest woman cannot help being interested in their affairs.

"My dear, you are far too sly," answered Mrs. Munks. "You know as well as I do;" and when Mrs. Drewitt declared and protested that she did

not know, that she had not the faintest idea of whom her visitor was speaking, Mrs. Munks only laughed the more, and declared it would be better for her not to enlighten such pristine innocence.

"Lady Emmeline never did flirt with any one you remember, and consequently there can be no person whom her marrying Mr. Adolphus Vervensoe will disappoint," went on Lady Emmeline's friend. "Colonel Vervensoe never did forbid any gentleman the house—never cut any acquaintance of yours when he met him."

"You surely do not mean Maxwell!" exclaimed Mrs. Drewitt. "Why he is young enough to be her son."

"Exactly so; and he is not rich either; while Mr. Vervensoe—is forty, though he has Craganlet. Still I fancy your nephew will be disappointed. We have met him often of late riding in that direction. Have not we, Louisa?"

"Yes, mamma," answered Louisa, who would have said "yes," even if her mamma had stated a falsehood. "But if you remember he told us he was looking after some land that was for sale."

"A man must say something," remarked Mrs.

Munks. "In my opinion, Lady Emmeline will do best to marry Mr. Vervensoe."

"I think so decidedly," said Mrs. Drewitt, "if she marry at all. But from what Lady Emmeline dropped the other day about her future plans I should think she meant to remain a widow."

"Time will show," was Mrs. Munks' reply. And time did show, for Maxwell Drewitt proposed that very same evening, was accepted by Lady Emmeline, and rode home to Headlands an engaged man.

The die was cast; the game played out. He had won a wife: he had made his fortune.

In after days it was one of Maxwell Drewitt's favourite remarks that "a man may get anything he wants in life if he be only willing to pay high enough for it."

Was he thinking then of the price he had paid for his wealth, of the exchange he had made for position? Who can tell? Who ever knew for certain what pleased or troubled Maxwell Drewitt, until that great sorrow came which clouded with darkness the evening of his life?

One fact was sure, however, viz., that when the young man finally chose to sell himself for money, to follow ambition and eschew love, he flung his

last chance of making a better thing of existence away for ever. But he had set out to conquer fortune, and he gained the day. He had decided that such a prize as Lady Emmeline might never cross his path again, and he determined to secure it while within his reach. He would continue to live at Headlands, and he would beautify and improve his property. He would farm Lady Emmeline's estate, and add acre to acre, and thousand to thousand, till, when Kincorth did come to him, as come it should, Drewitt would be a name worth talking about.

Better than ever the Martins were known, the Drewitts should be remembered. They had not sprung from any trooper of the merciless "Protector;" they had not kept their estates by currying favour with any king. The English papers should tell how a man—poor, disinherited, well-born—worked his way back to fortune, unassisted by his family, unhelped by patronage. Tourists would come and wonder to see, in the midst of that wild region, smiling fields and waving woods, and neat cottages and blooming gardens.

They would go back and speak of what one individual had effected. He should have to give evi-

dence on parliamentary committees: when he grew very, very rich, perhaps he would go up to Parliament himself. He could reclaim mile after mile of barren country. He would drain and cultivate the bogs; he would do away with the loose stone walls which divided the land when any division was attempted into about half-acre plots; he would plant trees up the mountains—there was no reason why trees should not grow among those fastnesses that he could understand; he would change the aspect of Connemara. Did he think of possessing the whole of it? Had he any vision about all Galway one day having but one landlord, and that landlord's name being Drewitt?

He reduced the 1,566,354 acres Galway contains into hundreds, and after deducting a certain portion for lake and mountain, calculated how long it would take to bring them under cultivation. He thought how useful those lakes would be for watering cattle, for purposes of irrigation; he ran over the best sites for towns and villages; he saw, in fancy, ships putting into each secure harbour; he saw the mines worked, the quarries filled with well-paid labourers, the country prosperous, the people warmly clad and sufficiently fed. He was

doubtful whether Mayo ought not to figure in his programme too. As he rode out of Cragantlet gates he gave the rein to his imagination, and bid it conjure up before him fame, wealth, success. He held the bridle loosely in his hand, letting it lie on his horse's neck, while he reflected on what he had just done, and on what fruit that act might bring forth for him.

"Gold begets gold," they say; that was what Maxwell hoped it might. "Money makes money" is oftentimes a great truth. Maxwell trusted it would prove a great truth in his case.

The kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof seemed to spread out before Maxwell's mind when he thought of what he had achieved on little, when he considered what he might effect with much.

The kingdoms of this world were around him—there was land to be cultivated—there were the resources of nature to be developed—there were the hidden riches of the country to be brought to light. There was fuel to be had for the cutting—fish for the catching—cattle for the rearing—corn for the growing—wealth for the hand of industry to gather in. There were barren wastes to clothe

with verdure—there were hills to plant with trees —there was granite to build houses—there was a land to be peopled—there was a people to elevate and civilize.

It was all very fine; nay, it was more, it was glorious; and yet, as the moon sailed out from behind a bank of watery clouds and shone over the country this man was traversing, a feeling of loneliness, of desolation, of misery came upon him which he could neither explain nor analyze.

There were the tremendous mountains, there the bare, solitary-looking lakes; far as his eye could see across the valley, nothing met his view but water, and stone, and bog: there were hills lying dark, and silent, and sullen in the distance. Above his head was a cloudy sky, where the moon kept wandering in and out like a troubled spirit. Now his way was dark, now light: now the moon shone clear on the lake, and the road, and the mountains, and then, again, she played fantastic tricks with the stunted bushes—with the huge boulders. She would lay a white trap along the highway and up the mountain-side, at which Maxwell's horses would shy affrighted; she would dance on the ripples of the waters; she would thrust her full face out of window, as it seemed, and stare down

at the earth, and then she would plunge behind the fringed curtains of the night, and be invisible for a time again, after which she would come shyly forth and gaze upon the man who rode slowly and alone through that desolate portion of God's fair earth.

It is not necessary for a person to be very sensitive or very poetical for a scene like this to produce a profound impression upon him. An individual who has not an amazingly warm heart can yet feel something stir within him when he looks upon a fine picture; and those who have lived in the country all their lives are as susceptible to the influences of nature's varying moods as though her every change was fresh to their comprehension.

All his life Maxwell Drewitt had loved scenery as he loved his country. All his life the sun, and the wind, and the snow, and the frost, and the sea, and the mountains had talked to him as they oftentimes fail to speak to a better man; and now, as the moon shone with a fitful brightness over the landscape, as her cold light fell on the breast of the lonely waters, as the clouds rolled up and shrouded the mountains in darkness, as the eternal hills returned his eager glance with a hard unsympathising gaze, as they looked with stony eyes

down upon him as they had looked on others who had gone under their shadow sighing or singing, laughing or weeping—as he paused and listened to the dash and flow of the waters, as he heard the whistle of the plover and the cry of the curlew, some voice through the still night spoke as clearly and distinctly to Maxwell Drewitt's soul as the "Preacher," who tried all things, and pronounced them vanity of vanities, tells the same tale to us.

Most probably Maxwell Drewitt had never read Ecclesiastes. If he had, he would certainly not have recollected any portion of it; and yet it was the same story as that told so many thousand years ago by the great king of Israel, which the night, and the clouds, and the moonlight, and the mountains were whispering prophetically in his ear—

"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I gathered me also silver and gold, and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy.

"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and *behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.*

Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me."

"It is a desolate place," thought Maxwell. "It gives a man the blues!" and he struck his heel against his horse's flank, and the animal sprang forward along the hard road, and the flints flashed fire as the iron hoofs dashed over them. He passed by lonely lakes, round the base of steep rocks, over bridges beneath which the mountain streams brawled noisily among the stones. He passed by silent cabins, by unroofed cottages, by deserted hearthstones gleaming white and bare in the moonlight; by a lonely chapel, by a forsaken-looking graveyard, where the tombs were covered with moss, where the crosses were black with weather, wind, and age.

On, on, he rode, and as he rode he sung, either to encourage his horse or to reassure himself, that cheerful ballad which recounts the loves of King Connor and the fair Kathleen, and the sad fate of the latter:—

"The castle portal stood grimly wide,
None welcomed the king from that weary ride,
For dead, in the light of the dawning day,
The pale sweet form of the welcomer lay
Who had yearned for his voice while dying."

"While dying!" hummed Maxwell, and the words brought him within sight of Eversbeg.

There was the sea, the fair, calm open sea, with the moonlight sleeping in it as peacefully as if he had not seen the same light wandering about the hills and through the valleys he had just left. There was Eversbeg Abbey, where poor Kathie had been lying dead this many a day. There was Eversbeg Head, round which Mrs. Drewitt had walked when she came to speak to him about Susan and Kathie and Lady Vervensoe.

There was the cabin where he had received her, where they had sat beside the turf-fire talking; there were the woods of Kincorth high up on the other side of Duranmore Bay, and there close down by the bay was his own place, which he meant to convert into the garden of Erin. Was he sorrowful when he came in sight of all these things? My reader, no! the dark hour had passed away, and Maxwell Drewitt was a man of the world, in the world, loving the world once more.

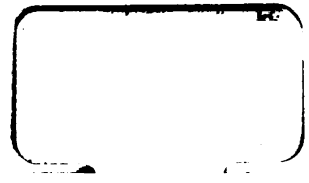
He was glad to have done with uncertainty, to have settled his future past recall, to feel no more hesitation, to have laid down a course to which he meant to adhere.

He was glad; he had done well: he should do better. It was a good match. He knew half the county would say what a capital thing he had done for himself. He knew many a man would gnash his teeth with rage when he heard of Drewitt having carried off the prize.

Altogether, Mr. Maxwell Drewitt was a contented man; and yet, as he came along the road that led down towards the bay, he stopped his horse for a moment, and strained his eyes away to a little cottage gleaming white and ghostly in the moonlight.

It was a deserted cottage now, and he had made it so. There was no Jenny waiting for him by the stream or up the ravine. She had long been living with her brother in Duranmore, and many suitors had sought her hand in vain.

"She will marry now," was the idea that passed through Maxwell's mind; and then, with a pang of remorse, he added, "Poor Jenny!"

END OF VOL. I.

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